Novak & Novak: Who Was Webster Hubbell?

THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR®

JUNE 1994

A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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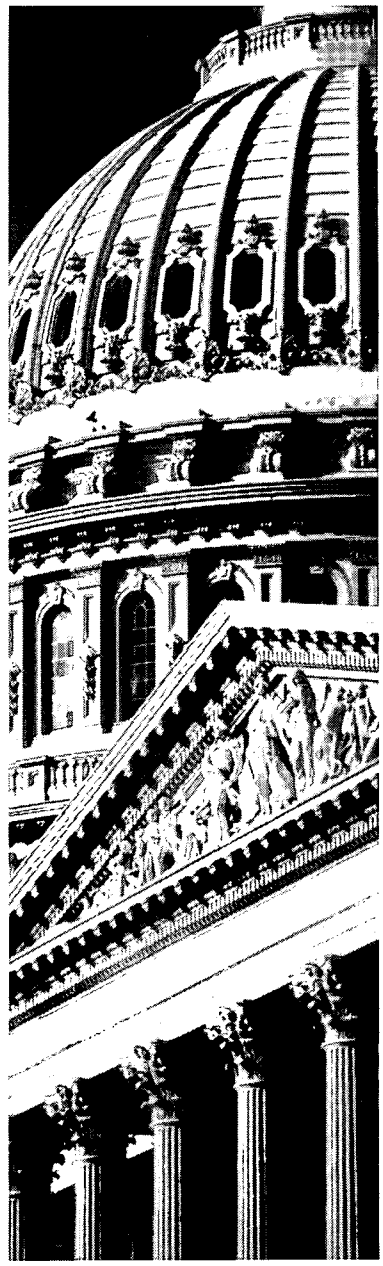

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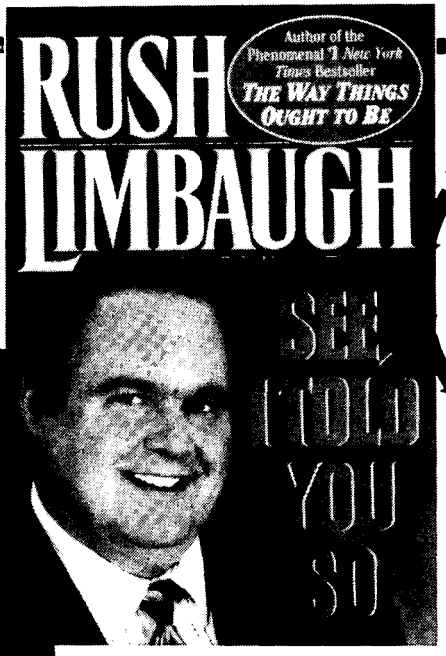

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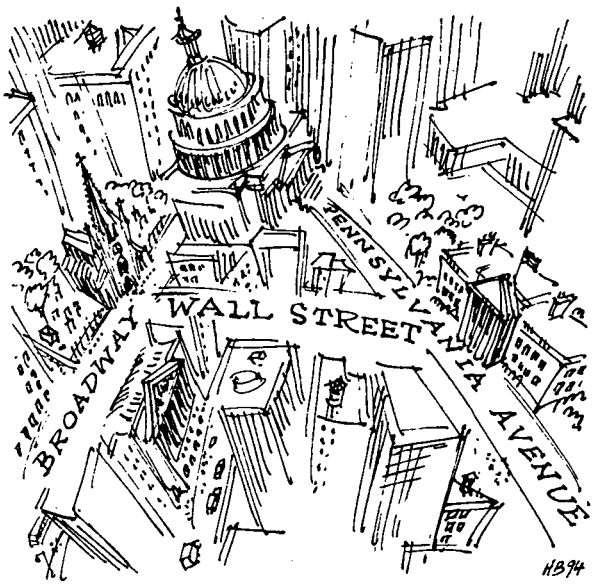

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Volume 27 Number 6, June 1994

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The Audit Bureau Member

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

"ALL I KNOW is what I read in the papers," the smarmy Garrison Keillor told approving journalists in Washington in April (as Bill Clinton energetically took notes), "so Whitewater is a complete mystery to me." Call it a revival of the "I know nothing" defense—though at least the sheepish Sgt. Schultz didn't wear it as a badge of honor. Appearing before American newspaper editors that same week, Bill Clinton won similar plaudits for feigning forgetfulness about Whitewater. "Imagine journalists applauding Nixon or Reagan for saying he couldn't remember," our unblinkered movie critic James Bowman noted in London's *Sunday Telegraph*. Look for willful amnesia and ignorance to be richly subsidized in Hillary's health plan.

HOW, THEN, did she do in her snap press conference? She was "stunning," "adroit," "reassuring," "unflappable," "determined," "exceptionally polished"—and that's just for starters. As for substance—let's not be tacky, okay? It's gotten to the point that our tonier journalists run for cover at the first sign of political grime. As readers will quickly pick up this month, the Clinton political style has taken hold in Washington, and would that it were only a matter of hypocrisy. It more generally involves an admixture of corruption and cronyism unadulterated by even a pinch of statesmanship and patriotic largesse. Wholesale technology transfer to Iran and North Korea, anyone? In an administration that has recused itself from foreign policy, this alone should get our co-presidents impeached (see Michael Ledeen and Stephen Bryen, page 20). Webb Hubbell? Robert Novak and Zelda Novak write the political obituary of this number-one Clinton operative, in which not speaking ill of the dead takes on new meaning (see page 24). Environmentalism? As Evan Fitzmaurice reports, the EPA has joined the list of federal departments politically directed to lay off Clinton benefactors (see page 44).

IN APRIL it was prominently reported in the *Washington Post* and elsewhere that the fired White House usher Chris Emery had lunched with David Brock. At the White House Correspondents Dinner, keynote jokester Al Franken even placed David at the head table, separated from the president only by one Lani Guinier. (Actually, David spent much of the evening running into Betsey Wright, but that's another story.) Well, David is back again, with a major reconstruction of Travelgate (see page 30). It's a stunning chronicle of small-minded venality, greed, and political recklessness and illegality. No wonder the Clinton crew went overboard in praising Richard Nixon after his untimely death. They assumed he was a crook.

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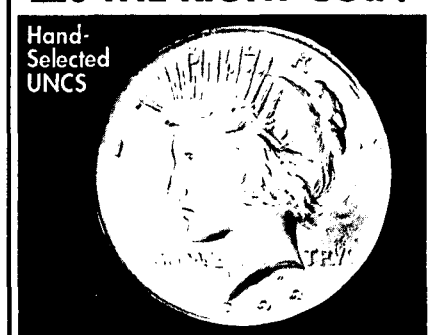

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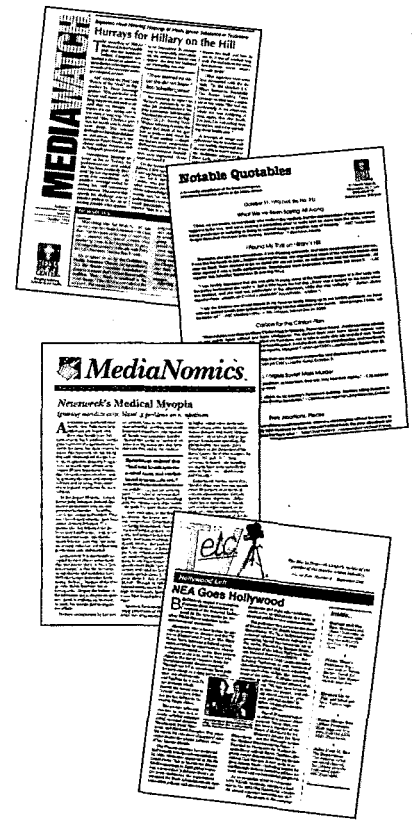

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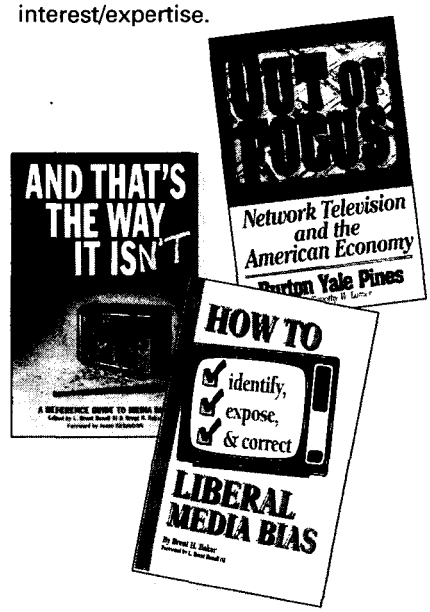

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• April passed, and with it the age of Richard Nixon. Naturally, our thirty-seventh president was fulsomely mourned by those who'd hated him obsessively for the better part of the last fifty years. He was their beacon, a figure of permanence and predictability whose dogged Main Street stolidity inspired them to run amok in asserting their moral and social superiority. Now they know Nixon's still the one. He aged gracefully and died in the spring. They're aging badly and expect to die in the dead of winter.

• Leading the mourners was our forty-second president. He heard the Rev. Billy Graham say, "There is a democracy about death. It comes equally to us all and makes us all equal when it comes." By that standard the Clinton foreign policy is helping to spread democracy far and wide: to Bosnia, Rwanda, South Africa, even Haiti. Naturally, Mr. Clinton refused to take sole credit. As he said in announcing Mr. Nixon's death, "I am deeply grateful to President Nixon for his wise counsel." Mr. Nixon will have the last word in a soon-to-be-published book, *Beyond Peace*, which blasts not only the Clinton foreign policy but also the "impenetrable" Clinton health plan. Among Mr. Nixon's survivors is Alger Hiss, who on April 18 celebrated his 90th birthday at a New York soirée, well ahead of time. "My real birthday is November 11," Mr. Hiss said, if you can believe him.

• On April 4, the University of Arkansas defeated Duke University in the NCAA men's basketball finals, the last good piece of news the Clinton state is likely to hear until kingdom come. As the place has become synonymous in the public mind with the fabled Philippines of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, local business leaders are blaming the Clintons. According to the *Washington Times*, fourteen leading Arkansas companies have seen their stock prices fall by 21.7 percent since December 31, 1992, an $11.2 billion loss in value. For lack of anything better to say, Bill told emissaries from this group that he feels their pain. Thanks to new approaches to redistribution, so do we. After all, the stock market has lost 12 percent of its value this year, interest rates are inching up, and on April 21 Mr. Clinton named two Keynesians to the Federal Reserve Board. The *Wall Street Journal*'s Robert Bartley foresees the return of stagflation. Arkansas should count its blessings, in any event: David Gergen is reportedly thinking of taking a teaching job at Duke University.

• Elsewhere in the world of higher learning, the University of Maine at Augusta this spring is offering dozens of new personal enrichment courses, including "Swedish Massage," "Past Life Regressions," "Introduction to Polarity Therapy," and the old standby "At the Hand of the Goddess." Movement is afoot in Olympia, Washington, to make the groves of academe safer at Evergreen State College. Sculptures depicting the power of women and extolling peace over aggression are to be installed along the campus's many forest trails. One student's project, "squirt guns filled with skunk scent," while environmentally appropriate, was rejected by organizers as too combative. According to a study of university women presented before the American Educational Research Association on April 8, tenured female full professors are the most likely to report incidents of sexual harassment.

• Tax day came and went, and if Arizona Republican Rep. Jon Kyl has his way, it'll henceforth coincide with Election Day. That won't make a bit of difference to Mr. Rodney King, whom the City of Los Angeles will pay a tax-free $3.8 million for the beating he received the night of March 3, 1991. Mr. King had sued for $15 million; it seems only fair that he should be allowed to deduct the $11.2 million he wasn't awarded. On the other hand, a November tax deadline might have a chilling effect on that nameless fellow in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who drove up to a postal drop box stark naked, according to witnesses. At this writing, it's unclear what effect the new filing date will have on Miss Cynthia Hess, an exotic dancer in Green Bay, Wisconsin, whose bust a higher court has allowed to be used as a tax write-off. Incidentally, the Clintons in early April agreed to pay some $14,000 in back taxes, though I'll be damned if I can remember what for.

• The quote of the month comes from Ms. Chris Evert, apropos a contretemps on an ESPN2 show,

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set off when host Jim Rome disparaged ex-Rams quarterback Jim Everett's toughness by repeatedly calling him "Chris Evert." Said the former tennis queen to *USA Today*: "The whole episode was very unprofessional, but at eight months pregnant I have more important things to discuss." In another staged showdown, Sen. Barbara Mikulski and Attorney General Janet Reno gave a conflict-resolution demonstration before a group of Baltimore middle-schoolers. "I told you to leave me alone and leave my man alone," Miss Mikulski squawked at Reno, who'd denied she was trying to steal the senator's boyfriend. Where's Webb Hubbell when you need him? The Bill and Hillary wars may be the real thing, however. In his otherwise pouty speech at the White House Correspondents Dinner on the day after Hillary's State Dining Room press conference, Bill mockingly noted, "Like my wonderful wife, I have been rezoned." Hillary responded a few days later at a gathering of the Hollywood Radio and Television Society. "I have tremendous help from Bill," she said, in response to a question about how she manages to balance career and motherhood. "He takes fathering very seriously." Their rivalry spilled over into religion. Last March, Bill professed to be "an honest, struggling believer, trying to grow every day, trying to learn more every day, never pretending to be anything other than I am." Hillary topped that on April 16, telling members of Church Women United, as summarized by Associated Press, "that religious faith has led her to believe that reforming the health care system is the right thing to do." As always, FOB Barbra Streisand had the last word, defending Hillary as a fount of "competence, intellect, stamina, warmth, and courage." They don't call her Funny Girl for nothing.

• Lame duck Senate majority leader George Mitchell showed you don't have to join the Supreme Court to make out like William O. Douglas. On April 19, he announced his engagement to Ms. Heather MacLachlan, twenty-five years his junior. Several solons are vying to succeed Mitchell in the leadership slot. One who won't make it is Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry, derided in a homestate paper as someone who has "few friends in the Senate and is hardly known as a consensus-builder." Another dubious candidate is Tennessee Sen. Jim Sasser—there's no way the expanding contingent of female senators will tolerate someone with a surname like his. Which leaves us with South Dakota Sen. Tom Daschle, who's made a career of bashing the private sector. Senate Democrats may have to widen their search. One possibility is former Haitian leader Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, currently down and out on the French Riviera where most recently he offered to do gardening for his neighbors. Another candidate is Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, who was prepared to resign his post earlier this year after he was accused of adultery. And if it's big spending they want, there's always James Carville. "You drag $100 bills through trailer parks—there's no telling what you'll find," Mr. Carville told a Washington breakfast on April 6, apparently in reference to his prowess at getting out the vote.

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The Men We Abandoned

I was struck by the (obviously unintentional) contrasts in your February issue. The editor-in-chief praises David Brock for his "bold and accurate journalism," his "careful analysis" and "high intellectual plane" in writing "Living With the Clintons" (*TAS*, January 1994).

Four pages later, we find John Corry's "The MIA Cover-Up" and his charge that "we have broken faith with men who fought for their country, and we are being blighted by an ever-widening moral stain." This is nonsense and, if Mr. Corry had emulated the professional practices of Mr. Brock, he would know it to be nonsense.

Mr. Corry cites a deposition by "Frank Shields, the former head of the Pentagon's POW/MIA Task Force." Never heard of Frank. However, during my five and a half years as deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia and Pacific Affairs (1969-74), I worked on almost a daily basis for several years with *Roger* Shields. Corry should have talked to him—of the countless hours spent trying to verify sightings, rumors, anomalies. Corry could have asked Roger Shields about "Red Beard," sighted in the Plaine des Jarres in Laos; about reports of "Americans" farming in the Parrot's Beak and the Fish Hook; about pilots known to have died in crashes (eyewitness reporting) but nevertheless listed as missing because their beepers went off; about sleaze merchants preying on next-of-kin claiming to have traveled by rail to the then Pathet Lao headquarters at Sam Neua (there are no trains in Laos to this day); of misinformation, fake photographs, and on and on. *That* would have been investigative journalism in the Brock tradition.

And one other thing. It is implicit in Corry's conclusion that this "moral stain" covers such former Secretaries of Defense as Melvin Laird and James Schlesinger. This is an insult to two of the finest men ever to have held that post, and cannot go unchallenged.

—Dr. Dennis J. Doolin
Kashiwa, Japan

There can be no doubt that the American government abandoned her POW/MIAs in Vietnam. Any closed society, especially a Communist one, knows well that it can resolve POW/MIAs with a bullet in the back of the head. And historically, that is what they do.

The North Vietnamese held back hundreds of French POWs to barter with long after the French Indochina war was over. The French paid money for these men on an individual basis, quietly and slowly. Head shots resolved the problem of those not repatriated and paid for.

The sad and bitter truth is that we, America, did not play the game with North Vietnam. We did not pay up. Our POWs were murdered as a result. Neither did we have the courage to force North Vietnam, by military and political means, to return our POWs as the peace accords demanded.

We lacked the moral courage to defend our own men. We lacked the political will to force the issue. We lacked the simple dignity to honor our end of a contract with these men; if you fight for us, we will fight for you.

One of the reasons that I joined the Marine Corps, and served three tours of duty in Vietnam, was that the Marine Corps had a tradition of not leaving their wounded or dead on the battlefield. In my experience, in as much as it was humanly possible, Marines held true to our tradition. . . .

—Jim Dawson
Clearlake Oaks, California

As much as I welcome "The MIA Cover-Up" and any other media contribution toward illuminating POW/MIA, I wonder about a few points.

According to information I have, Wallace Hynds's I-Date was August 2, 1967, which is a long way from May 28, 1985.

Semantics aside, once KIA/BNR, technically a person may be considered no longer MIA. That, arguably, does dispose of three Jacksons. However, were the remains returned October 14, 1982, confirmed as those of USN E5 Wm Braxton Jackson? . . .

As for Henry Serex, what came of the recent satellite imagery meeting involving his survivors, Senator Smith, et al.? . . .

How about some of those POWs who were moved up to the camp near the China border shortly prior to Homecoming and did not move back south? . . .

—A.S. Warinner
F-4 Pilot, Ubon, 1967-68
Henderson, Nevada

Re: "The MIA Cover-Up": I have never read a more feckless, untruthful article in a serious magazine and I am shocked that you gave it credibility by publishing it. It is based on presumptions piled on hearsay and its author draws what he says are "obvious conclusions from incontrovertible facts." The "obvious conclusions and incontrovertible facts" are solely his own, completely devoid of evidence admissible in a court of law.

What is indeed an incontrovertible fact is that in 1973, Kissinger and Nixon agreed in writing a week after the signing of the Paris Peace Accord ending the Vietnam war, that the United States would contribute to postwar reconstruction in North Vietnam in the range of $3.25 billion of aid over five years. This self-imposed penalty was in apparent atonement for the heinous crimes we committed to this poor devastated country halfway around the world, and for killing over two million of its men, women, and children. Not one cent of this promised aid has ever been paid to this day. By no stretch of the imagination did Vietnam pose a threat to America justifying intervention.

If we were not the most powerful nation in the world, Nixon, Johnson, Kissinger et al. would have been treated as war criminals.

Please cancel my subscription.

—Abraham Ellis
New York, New York

I received my copy of *TAS* today and read the article "The MIA Cover-Up" with sincere interest. Thank you for saying it like it is. For sixteen years and one day, I listened to meaningless rhetoric from those involved in the cover-up. It didn't make any difference whether they resided in the White House, Congress, State Department, DIA, CIA, or wore a uniform like my husband's. I heard everything from "If your husband survived the crash, he was probably eaten by a tiger in the jungle" to "Even if your husband is alive, it wouldn't be politically feasible to do anything about it." Until the day I received a call from the Air Force saying that his remains were being returned, I had no reason on earth to believe he was

(continued on page 82)

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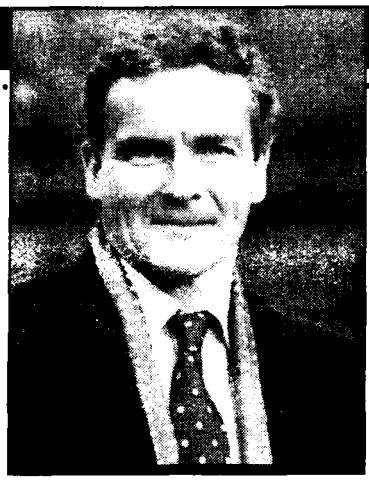


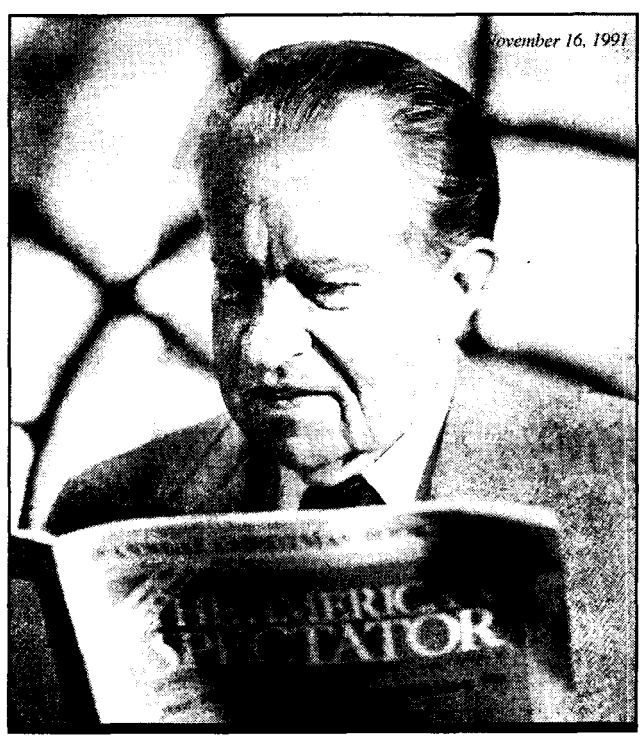
Richard Nixon, R.I.P.

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

And so a stroke felled former president Richard Nixon. His old body had taken a lot of abuse. He had been a fixture in American life during six decades. His presidency was not my cup of tea, and I had occasion in the late 1960s and early 1970s to deride it. Alas, once he was out of power he inveigled me into friendship. Had the friendship begun when he was in power I might have flown in Air Force One with him to China and served a stretch in public housing.

How we became friends is very simple. He deceived me. He was in exile in San Clemente. One of his aides who happened to write for *The American Spectator* invited me down from Los Angeles for dinner. That meant I had to spend the night. After dinner my friend said "the boss will see you in the morning." I was reluctant, but reminded that a gentleman does not kick a guy when he is down. Nixon was down and nearly out. The next day I was ushered into the ex-president's library for coffee: there the infamous pol sat, slouched in a reading chair that appeared to be floating on a circular pond of books and papers discarded beneath it. With a pipe at his side and reading glasses, he looked like a fellow editor. Was this a set-up?

I shall never know. I do know that we discussed politics, history, and sports. He was interested in biography, and was reading voraciously. He assumed that I would stick around and have coffee with him the next day. I did, and not reluctantly. The character of an interesting man is often like a crystal, sometimes like a diamond. Different facets are drawn out by different conditions—a change of lighting, a shifted position, the colors nearby. The Nixon I saw that first morning and for years to come, usually over coffee, sometimes over dinner, always in private, was bookish, reflective, fleetingly religious. As with his friend Henry Kissinger, different aspects of his personality entered and exited abruptly, occasionally without warning.



I never really saw a squirrelly side to Nixon, or a conspiratorial side. Doubtless both were there. History attests to it. Yet with me he talked books, history, philosophy, current events, sports. When President Carter had been in office but a few months, Nixon solomonically pronounced him a one-term president. "He does not learn from his mistakes," Nixon asseverated. He kept an eye on geopolitics and on all national races. When almost everyone else was wrong, he correctly predicted the 1980 presidential results and every Senate race save one or two. Back in 1977, when so many people believed we had seen the last of Ronald Reagan, Nixon said, "Don't count him out. He's a lot tougher than people think."

When I first met Nixon he looked like hell. Viewing his deeply lined face, I thought the cartoonists had been too charitable. As the years rolled by, and he produced books and articles more capably executed than those of any president since Woodrow Wilson, his face steadily returned to the health of the face that once filled our TV screens from the Oval Office. Obviously the tortured face that I first saw in San Clemente was the face of unconcealable suffering. As Watergate receded into the past, the therapy of writing books proved to be cosmetic

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times *column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.*

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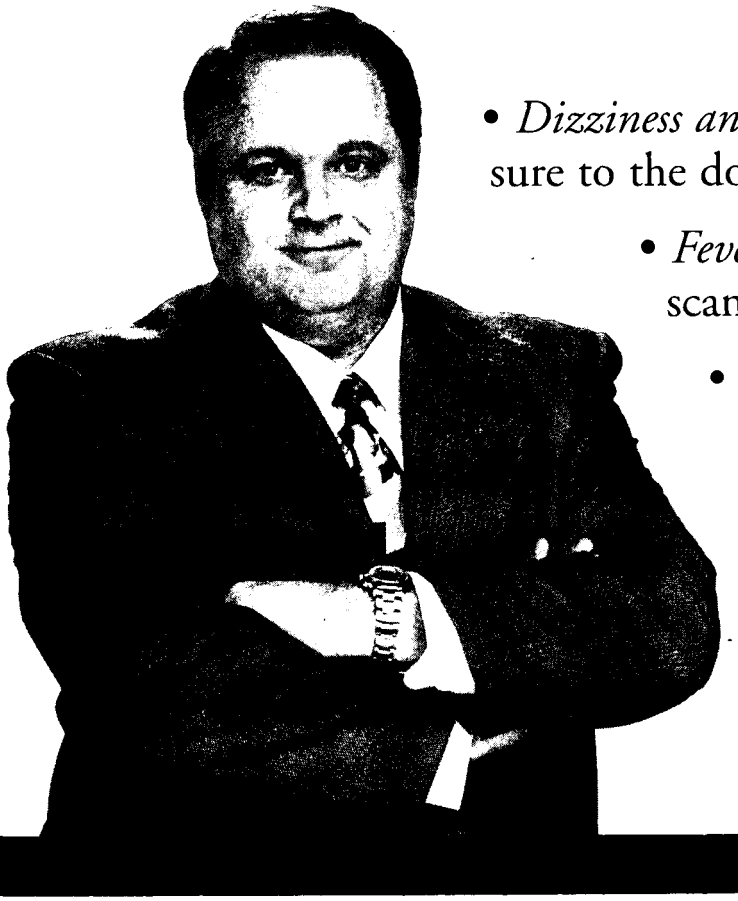
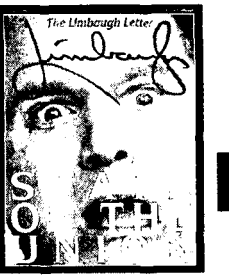
Do you SUFFER from the following symptoms?



- *Dizziness and disorientation* from exposure to the dominant media?
- *Fever and blurred vision* when scanning your child's textbooks?
- *Headaches* when watching President Clinton's Town Hall meetings?
- *Hand tremors* when filling out your 1040 form?



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surgery for Nixon. He finished another just before the stroke hit.

Obviously I came to like the Nixon I knew. He was a piece of Americana and a chunk of history. In talking with him one heard the concerns of a generation that passed through Depression, world war, and prosperity into televisionland and twenty-four-hour entertainment from flickering noise boxes, live concerts, and various pills and potions. He was uneasy about televisionland and contemptuous of the twenty-four-hour entertainment. Whenever I was with Nixon I had the impression that he was not all that different from the best Democrats of his generation, say Hubert Humphrey—though more interesting.

So what will historians record as his last words? He knew many of the great political figures of the century and had read the lives of the rest. Last lines were important to him. In answer to his niece's query, "What is the matter, Uncle James?" Madison's last words were "Nothing more than a change of *mind*, my dear." Oscar Wilde's were "I am dying, as I have lived, beyond my means." Heinrich Heine said, "God will forgive me; that's his job." And Italy's exiled King Umberto II expired after saying "Italia." One of Nixon's favorite lines from Churchill has Churchill saying of Asquith, "His children are his best monuments." To see the fine family that gathered at Nixon's sickbed, and later at his funeral, is to realize that Nixon could have lifted that line and said, "*My* children are my best monuments." He has other monuments, of course, but a great man's work starts with his family. ❐

Muddlers Abroad

It isn't just in Bosnia that American foreign policy is irresolute and muddled. There are other points around the globe where American power is either receding or nonexistent. Nor is it only President Bill Clinton whose foreign policy is irresolute and in a muddle. Very few American leaders today have offered a reasonable vision as to what foreign policy America might adopt now that the Cold War is history and the vindicated policy of containment is no longer applicable. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has just published *Diplomacy*, a superb account of foreign policy wherein the reader will find an intelligent blueprint for a proper post-Cold War policy, though it is doubtful contemporary America has the energy or will for it.

Americans are not focused on foreign policy. Instead our energies are consumed with futile undertakings: the war between the sexes, multiculturalism, affirmative action, The Homeless! All these concerns are framed in such a way as to be at best futile, at worst idiotic. What precisely are we to do about The Homeless? Many of them do not want homes. Many do not want to be part of society and some obviously want to disrupt society. Or what about affirmative action? When will the country have enough affirmative action? What precisely is the proper balance of boys and girls, blacks and whites, Europeans and Asians, vegetarians and meat-eaters, in the workplace, the community, outer space? And then there is multiculturalism at the university—by definition it is undefinable; in fact it is a charade confected by con artists seeking power. All these matters deflect America from the serious business of government, which is basically to maintain the peace at home and abroad.

America has been muddling through at home since the 1960s. The social pathologies—drugs, illegitimacy, family breakup—accumulate, but at home we can delay our day of reckoning. We do not have this option in foreign policy, where it is in the interest of our enemies to thwart us. In Washington and the capitals of many of our allies the smart money is betting that our inept president's Waterloo will come in foreign policy. It makes sense to me. President Clinton has demonstrated a magnificent talent for getting himself out of domestic jams, by shifting blame, mislabeling problems—in general deceiving the public and the press. Foreign policy jams are a different matter. The Serbian dictator Milosevic cannot be sweet-talked or deceived, and he has an army to carry out his will. So do Saddam Hussein, and Kim Il Sung, and a dozen or so other flouters of international law. Foreign affairs are going to become less and less manageable for this president.

New York's Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was on solid ground when he urged immediate removal of the U.N. arms embargo that prevents the Bosnians from arming themselves against the oncoming Serbs. And he was right to advocate punishing Serbian rapacity by bombing their bridges across the Danube. Clinton's policy of bluster and resignation, noble declarations and retreat, has allowed a spread of ethnic cleansing and aggression in the former Yugoslavia that is at once immoral and likely to continue. There is no reason to believe that once the Serbs have hacked out all the desirable territory in Bosnia they will not set their sights on Croatia. There are already sufficient territorial disputes between the Serbs and the Croats to ensure years of warfare. What will the United States and NATO do then?

President Clinton is the classic playboy pol. His greatest gifts are sweet talk and evading responsibility. But he cannot evade responsibility in foreign policy for long. There are dozens of hot spots heating up. Right now in the Caribbean, the promising results of years of carefully shaped policy are being endangered by inattention and shortsighted economies. We are closing embassies just when Cuban diplomats are attempting to spread their influence. The Cubans want an end to the UN embargo against them, and they are courting support among the island nations in their neighborhood. Our response, in keeping with the mediocrity of this Administration, is confused and erratic.

We are even closing our embassy in Grenada. There, years of political instability have been overcome by force of arms and careful cultivation of the citizenry. In Grenada the populace is grateful for the sacrifices that we made there. Yet as the date to close the American embassy approaches, suspicions among the inhabitants grow. There is talk again of radical turmoil and a return of Cuban influence. As in the Middle East, Korea, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere the brutes are growing restless in the absence of forthright American policy. Clinton will not be able to evade the brutes. ❐

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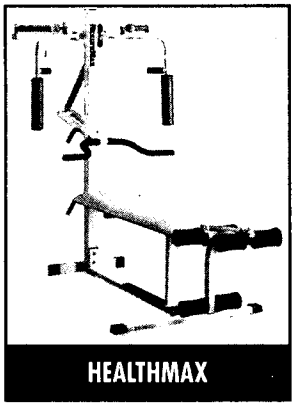

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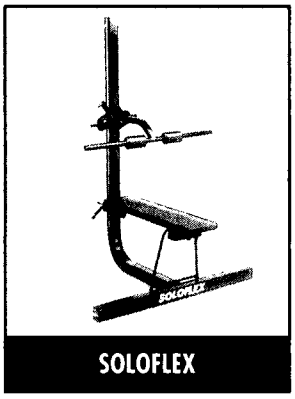

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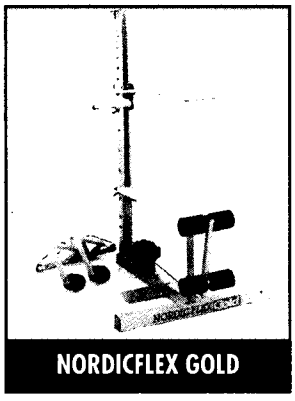

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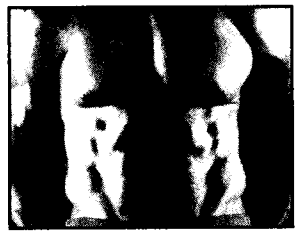

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Welfare Wizards

by Tom Bethell

Some may not recall the feverish agitation in the press when Ronald Reagan became president. Every day there was this great whirring of wings, this incessant whine of indignation. The whole Hive was in a state of unprecedented uproar. It signaled a great crisis: Reagan might actually cut back the welfare state! That was what it was all about. The agitation went on for the better part of Reagan's first year. Then it gradually died down. And it worked, I regret to say. There were no cuts. But I never forgot the uproar, and later the recollection of it has served as a kind of Geiger counter for public policy. If you don't hear that furious clicking and whirring, you know there's no threat to existing arrangements.

Move forward to 1988. Newspaper stories at the time were telling us that welfare was, finally and once and for all, going to be reformed. Work requirements would be added to the system. Henceforth, those on welfare would have to work for their benefits. Pretty tough right-wing medicine was about to be administered, folks. Ronald Reagan was still on the case! The liberals brilliantly feigned defeat: wrestled to the ground by that old wizard in the White House. "Do we like it?" they would say. "No, we don't. But you know how Reagan is. Mostly asleep, but a formidable adversary at times! When he decides to twist arms there's not much we can do." The reform was enacted.

"The Senate's passage of a welfare reform bill puts the nation on the threshold of a historic change from old policies that foster dependency to new ones designed to promote self-sufficiency," the *New York Times* artfully editorialized. "That is cause for celebration." The Republicans duly retired to their favorite watering hole, Chumps and Charleys. Rep. Thomas Downey, New York Democrat, called it the first "significant change in our welfare system in 53 years." A few weeks later the *Times* almost gave the game away when it hailed this "rare social policy step forward in the Reagan era." In the Senate, there were ninety-three yeas, three nays. Hey, the old man had finally managed to get the welfare establishment to accept work requirements. The Family Support Act, it was called.

There was just one little detail that I couldn't help noticing. Here was this supposedly conservative reform being passed, yet the Hive was quiet—tranquil as a summer's day. How come there were no squawks from the Children's Defense Fund, the American Public Welfare Association, the National Association of Social Workers, Peter Jennings, the *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*? Did they know something that Bob Dole didn't? Charles Murray's elucidation followed in the *Wall Street Journal*. He ventured the "specific prediction that the number of female-headed families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC, the main welfare program] will increase, and increase out of proportion to the growth of the general population."

In a well-intentioned attempt to make it easier for people to get off welfare, the legislation had unexpectedly (to Republicans) made it easier for new people to get on welfare. What has happened to the rolls since then? In the last five years they have expanded more rapidly than at any time since the late 1960s. It was predicted that the number of families on AFDC would not reach five million until late 1998. But that milestone was reached early in 1993. Welfare's apologists say that this increase was caused by the recession. But that is now over, and the rolls have not subsided.

"It hasn't worked," Congresswoman Jan Meyers of Kansas told me. "Less than one percent of the welfare population is working today. And the program has cost us $10 billion more than expected—$13 billion instead of $3 billion."

Turn now to President Clinton's promise to "end welfare as we know it." That was popular, no doubt helped get him elected. When he dips in the polls, he sets forth to renew the promise: "Two years and out" for those on welfare. What has been happening on the welfare front? First of all, heed the Geiger counter. It's quiet, notice. This is a country that is now run by social workers in all but name. (The other day, one youth accused of killing another offered the defense of "ghetto stress syndrome.") Believe me, if a proposal to throw people off welfare after two years was anywhere *near* the drawing boards there would be the most unbelievable uproar you ever heard in your life. If you want to know what's afoot with welfare policy, then, you don't need to slog through all those newspaper articles (unless you're a social worker, of course). All you have to do is glance at the headlines. If there is no uproar, the "end of welfare as we know it" is nowhere in sight.

By way of background, here is some fine print from the *New York Times* of last January 5:

> The Clinton Administration is trying to devise a strategy that would allow it to appear to be pushing for welfare reform, even while delaying action on a bill until the President's health care plan clears Congress. The effort to delay welfare legislation so that it does not interfere with the Administration's primary goal of health care, while not acknowledged publicly, has been evident in a number of recent Administration actions and was discussed at a Cabinet meeting on Monday, officials said. They said such a

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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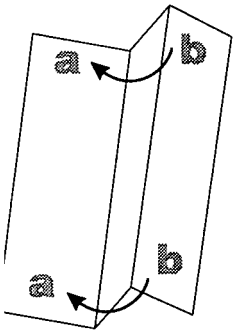

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strategy would make it unlikely that a major welfare bill would pass Congress this year.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, then complained that Clinton had used the welfare issue merely as "boob bait for the Bubbas." He threatened to hold health care hostage unless the administration took welfare reform seriously. He added that there really *is* a welfare crisis, which is not the case with health care, of course.

The administration jumped to attention, but the original strategy of deception surely survived. No Democratic welfare bill has yet been proposed. Welfare reform may be popular with the "bubbas," but it gives Clinton a headache: it is not popular with what is called the Democrats' "core constituency"—liberal activists and the black leadership. The black rank-and-file would no doubt love welfare reform, but they're out of the picture because they have placed their trust in leaders who in turn have been bought off with gerrymandered districts, patronage, affirmative-action programs: in a word, with power. For the Democrats' "core constituency," it is vital that welfare-as-we-know-it be preserved. Their livelihoods consist in doling it out. Hence Clinton's political difficulty with welfare. (It's interesting to note, by the way, that Democratic activists are located at the "core" of the party, while analogous Republicans are marginalized on "the far right.")

If that were all there was to the story, there would be no great problem. Welfare is indeed the "root cause" of the mounting crisis in our inner cities, and people do sense this. But failure to deliver on his welfare promise would only hurt Clinton. Enter next a strange posse of Republicans, led by Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania and Tom DeLay of Texas, riding to the Democrats' rescue. What they have brought with them is a welfare-reform package very much like the 1988 disaster—one that would again expand welfare in the guise of reforming it. There's a possibility, then, that Clinton could, late in the session, slip past his liberal core by adopting the Republican proposal. The Black Caucus would vote against it, but liberal Republicans just might ensure passage. There would be much talk of bipartisanship, Clinton would take credit for moving to the center, and the relevant Republicans—particularly Nancy Johnson of Connecticut, Clay Shaw of Florida, and Fred Grandy of Iowa, in addition to DeLay and Santorum—would be invited to the Rose Garden for the signing ceremony. And Newt Gingrich, who now appears to have become more solicitous of the liberal wing of the GOP than his own core constituency, would surely be conspicuously in the picture, standing right behind the president. He would be the toast of Washington: At last, Strange New Respect for Newt!

What is in the Republican bill? First, work requirements. Republicans still haven't noticed that these lead straight to: government jobs programs, training programs, and day care. "Workfare" can become "a covert way of passing a large new day-care program," as the *Washington Post* noted. To be sure, the campaign cry, "We're going to make them work for their welfare!" elicits applause from voters. But Democrats secretly smile at the jobs program they see coming down the pike. As in 1988, the new "work requirements" are postponed until five years after enactment. This is a "Henry Waxman trick" intended to place the cost of the new programs beyond the field of vision of the Office of Management and Budget, Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation points out. "See, welfare reform won't cost very much at all," the Republican moderates tell themselves. The Democrats know that as usual they will have the power to riddle the whole thing with loopholes. They love that briar patch.

Another grave defect is pointed out by Robert Carleson, former U.S. commissioner of welfare and Ronald Reagan's welfare director in California. The main problem with U.S. welfare is that benefit levels are so high that people can only with difficulty be induced to leave the rolls. Take a job and they may lose their benefits. The great error made in the 1988 negotiations (insisted on by Rep. Waxman of California at the last minute, which is when the bad things happen: Republicans are too nervous about being called obstructionist to object at that point) was to permit those on welfare who took a job to retain Medicaid benefits for a year. This put some workers with Medicaid side by side with others without it. The latter felt resentment, and some decided to go on welfare themselves, if only to quit and then retain one year's Medicaid. Hence the recent welfare explosion.

The new Republican bill would cause another such expansion, because it would allow those on welfare who join the work force to "disregard" up to 50 percent of their income before it disqualifies them from receiving benefits. Once again, then, workers receiving government benefits would be placed side by side with others who are not. Some of the latter would be induced to quit their jobs and go on welfare, then resume working and share in the benefits enjoyed by their subsidized co-workers. The "income disregards" are so generous that families with income up to about $23,000 a year could become eligible for welfare, Carleson said. Both Robert Rector and Charles Murray point out that the defects of this bill closely resemble those of the 1988 law—proof, if any more is needed, that Republicans are incapable of learning from experience. Tom DeLay's support of the bill is as off as it would be if he were promoting Senator John Chafee's health plan.

Fortunately Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, and others now see the danger and they are calling for something a little tougher. A more sensible proposal will soon be offered by Rep. Jim Talent, freshman Republican from Missouri. Bennett points out that the problem with welfare is "not that too many unmarried women are not working," but that too many are having babies. In paying for these illegitimate births, and in providing the mothers with a package of benefits more generous than the fathers are normally capable of providing, the welfare state has cuckolded the ghetto male and thereby has imposed enormous costs on society.

"Republicans must begin by preventing the President from packaging status quo policies as major reform," Empower America noted in a memo that finally sets the politics of welfare straight. "This can only be accomplished by *sharpening* policy differences, not by blurring them with tepid legislative compromises." Propose something tough, in other words, and let the Democrats reveal their true ideology by voting it down. As Charles Murray adds, a mushy reform will not only expand the welfare rolls but kill the subject for another five years. If nothing passes this year, on the other hand, the pressure will build for something better in the next session of Congress. ❐

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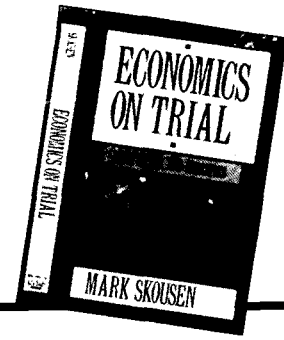

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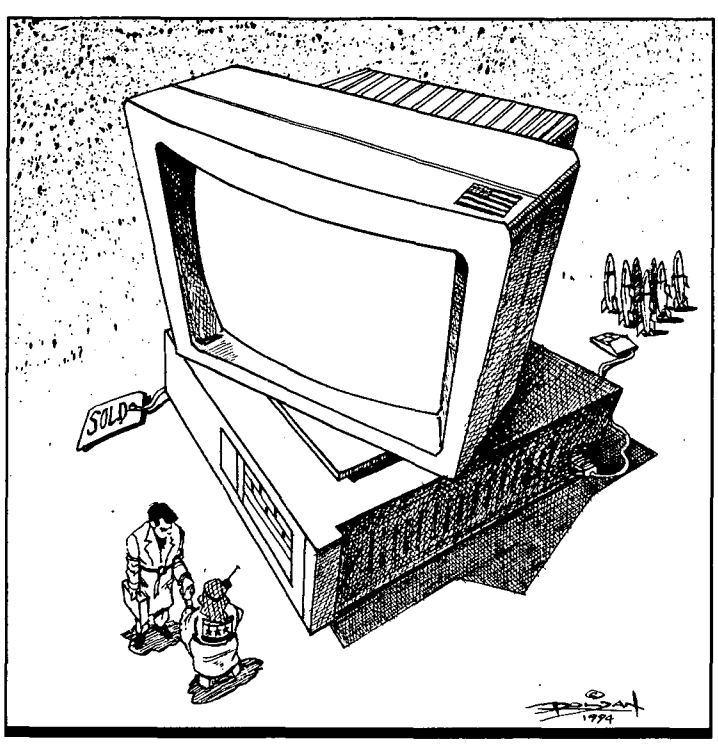
Decontrol Freaks

The Bush and Clinton administrations' unprecedented giveaway of secret military technology.

by Michael Ledeen and Stephen Bryen

During the presidential campaign of 1992, Bill Clinton and Al Gore chastised George Bush for having tilted American policy toward Saddam Hussein, thereby tacitly encouraging the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Their most dramatic evidence for the tilt was the shocking flow of militarily useful technology from the U.S. to Iraq. "George Bush sold dangerous technology to a criminal who was intent on developing and using lethal weapons," Al Gore intoned. "George Bush does not fit the requirements of the New World Order his own speechwriters once summoned up. We require a fresh approach."



Clinton and Gore were entirely right, but their own policies have made a bitter mockery of their promises. Bush and his team irresponsibly and knowingly lifted controls on some sensitive technology, yet their actions pale in comparison with the near-total destruction of export controls by Messrs. Clinton, Christopher, Aspin, and Perry. Every bit of the lethal technology that Saddam Hussein obtained illegally can now be legally purchased by all but a tiny handful of pariah countries, and those bad guys can easily pick them up from third parties. The Clinton administration has enabled America's enemies to substantially reduce the time they need to develop countermeasures to the most modern U.S. weaponry. Graver still, since they can now buy even the manufacturing technology, it has become virtually impossible for the U.S. to get advance warning of enemy intentions and capabilities. The Clinton people justify this unprecedented sabotage of our military advantage by claiming it will help business; but theirs is a myopic vision. The Clinton policy, in fact, sacrifices long-term

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profits in favor of quick gains for political allies in the business world.

Nowhere is the story so clear as in the case of computers. Computers drive advanced telecommunications, coordinate battlefield strategies, guide super-precise manufacturing techniques, create virtual realities that permit weapons testing inside the computer's universe rather than in the real world, and target Cruise and Patriot missiles. In the Gulf War, America's superior computers guided the Stealth aircraft and smart weapons that shattered the technologically inferior defenses that the Soviets had given their Iraqi allies, just as Israeli jet pilots flying American F-15 fighter planes delivered an amazing 82-0 thrashing of the Syrians over Lebanon a decade earlier. On board each Israeli American-built F-15 was a "look-down, shoot-down" radar pod containing 5,280 semiconductors on more than a dozen circuit boards packed neatly into a slim box barely one foot square. No MiG had such a device, although the Soviets had tried desperately to build one. Ten years later, the F-15 radar system required only 40 semiconductors, and the Soviets were at least ten years away from developing the ability to manufacture them.

The Red Army could neither make the advanced radar and guidance systems that enabled American and allied planes and missiles to cut through the electronic jungle over the modern battlefield, nor could it defend against U.S. attacks. Desperate to obtain the technology, the KGB mounted perhaps the most ambitious espionage operation in history. Long unknown to Western intelligence services, a new spy organization—Directorate T—was created by the KGB and charged with the illegal procurement of advanced Western technology.

The French government was provided with the secrets of this massive program by one of the most fascinating characters in the pages of modern spycraft: a KGB official who once worked in France for Directorate T. At the very beginning of the Reagan years, this brave man—known to this day only by his codename "Farewell"—provided the French with thousands of pages of KGB analyses and instructions. The documents—which François Mitterrand personally gave to Ronald Reagan—exposed a massive Soviet operation, focusing on semiconductors and computers to be used in upgrading Soviet strategic missiles, spy satellites, and submarines. If it had been successful, the Soviet Union could have closed the American technological lead in computers and semiconductors to a mere year or two.

Farewell's invaluable assistance lasted barely six months: while preparing to provide new materials, he was arrested and executed by the KGB. But no single program did so much damage to the Soviet Empire as the one the Reagan administration launched after the arrival of the Farewell documents. Export controls were tightened, new enforcement mechanisms were put in place, and thousands of U.S. and allied customs agents were put to work to discover, block, or at least track exports of militarily useful technology.

The core of this vast international network was COCOM, originally a NATO committee to manage the economic embargo against the Soviet bloc, later a sleepy bureaucratic outpost housed in an annex of the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Following the Farewell revelations, the Pentagon gave new clout to COCOM, and by the mid-eighties it was the true international hub of American-led export controls, involving all NATO countries except Iceland, plus Japan and Australia. So successful was the Reagan program that hardly a week went by in the Gorbachev period without a heart-rending appeal from St. Mikhail himself or his apostle Shevardnadze, begging the West to abolish the wicked COCOM and trade with the Soviet Union as with any other country.

There may also be some more personal ties between the Clintons and the computer lobby. Back in 1991, Hillary Rodham Clinton was paid over $100,000 for work done on behalf of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. The money actually came from a parent organization headed by Apple's John Sculley.

Bush, Baker, and Scowcroft fell for it, and instructed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare a "core list" of items they would dread seeing out there in the free market—opening other technology to decontrol. The chiefs wound up recommending decontrol of advanced underwater equipment; special grinders; and diamond turning machines (used to manufacture laser mirrors and small nuclear weapons); specialized digital displays for mapping, satellite imagery, and image analysis (with no upper limit on performance); specialized microprocessors; and advanced semiconductor-manufacturing technology. Decontrolling this last item alone gave the Soviets the ability to produce microelectronics more advanced than those deployed by American forces in the Gulf War. Thanks to the Bush team's largesse, the Red Army gained ten years in development and deployment time.

What's more, the Bush administration decontrolled advanced digital computers far more powerful than those targeted by the KGB just a few years earlier, including "ruggedized" computers suitable for use on the battlefield and—like most of the technology decontrolled by Bush and later by Clinton—unavailable from non-American sources. These massive decontrols enabled the Soviets not only to leapfrog a decade, but also to send

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better weapons to such clients as Iraq, Libya, and Syria.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the U.S. learned that Iraq's clandestine program for the design and production of weapons of mass destruction was far more advanced and contained considerably more American technology—some of it obtained illegally, some of it thanks to Bush's decontrol—than was previously believed. Bush then held the line against further decontrol.

So long as he was a candidate, Clinton was four-square in favor of controlling the proliferation of dangerous technologies. His subsequent about-face was clearly foreshadowed in several key appointments: William Perry, originally Les Aspin's deputy at the Pentagon, had long argued that an ambitious program of export controls was fatuous—bad guys could usually find a way to get what they wanted, and since that generally took place outside the United States, others made the profits. His views were generally shared by Lynn Davis, an undersecretary of state; Mitchell Wallerstein, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for counterproliferation; and Ashton Carter, the assistant secretary to whom Wallerstein reports. All of them had denounced the Reagan program of export controls.

But even with such a cast; no one expected the spectacular show that Clinton unleashed in two acts, the first last September, the second in late March. On each occasion the dimensions of the decontrol were so great that even decontrol lobbyists pronounced themselves flabbergasted. Chris Padilla, the government affairs specialist at AT&T, called Clinton's new export policy "a home run . . . we're pinching ourselves."

The government measures computers in terms of CTPs (Composite Theoretical Performance), expressed in MTOPS (millions of theoretical operations per second). The popular 486 personal computer, for example, is 12.5 MTOPS, which was the decontrol level until 1992. Anything from 200 up was considered a "supercomputer." A year earlier, the Bush administration had asked COCOM to raise the decontrol level to 25, but COCOM had rejected the request, in part because some of the members thought it too dangerous, and in part because others saw it as a move by the U.S. to capture the market for its own companies. It is worth noting that this fear was well justified, but a bit late: more than 97 percent of all the computers currently in use worldwide are of U.S. origin or derived from U.S. technology. In any event, Bush was not moved, and unilaterally raised the CTP decontrol level to 25, to the unconcealed fury of other COCOM members.

The computer companies had asked that the decontrol level be raised to 110, which would have made available to any U.S. enemy highly advanced work stations with CAD/CAM or signal-processing capabilities superior to anything then in use by the American military. For example, a country like Iraq could design and "test" ballistic or cruise missiles until an actual flying prototype was available, and unless the U.S. had somebody able to report to it on the activities at secret Iraqi work stations, it wouldn't have a clue about their operations. Worse still, since computers can be expanded rather easily (much as we might add memory chips to our PCs), there would be a magnifier effect on the decontrol. For instance, a typical Sun SparcServer 2000 computer has a basic CTP of 96 MTOPS, but it can easily be expanded to 860, and a Silicon Graphics Challenger is classified at 119 MTOPS, but can be expanded to 3300—an awesome machine.

Clinton announced his first decontrol last September 29: through 194 MTOPS, nearly twice *the industry's* request, plus a promise to ask COCOM to raise the level to 500. Our allies were enraged. The French asserted that anything over 100 MTOPS would constitute a grave risk for Western security, and not a single other COCOM member approved the American position. Clinton backed down to his fallback position, the industry request of 110, but it was only a tactical retreat. The second announcement came at the end of March: decontrol through 1000 MTOPS (except for sales to North Korea). In the meantime, COCOM had quietly expired. The member countries, although unable to agree on the details, nonetheless agreed it was urgent to control the proliferation of technologies of mass destruction. Thus all agreed they would observe the restrictions of the COCOM Control List until a new set of rules could be defined. Within minutes of COCOM's death, Clinton trashed his own promise to abide by the old COCOM rules by unilaterally decontrolling roughly two-thirds of the list, and creating a special category for the People's Republic of China that specifically decontrols the bulk of advanced technology for sale to that country. And yet, in one of those wildly misleading announcements that have come to characterize this administration, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Export Administration claimed that "current [COCOM] control lists will be retained by the member nations until a successor regime is established." The real story came several paragraphs further down: "all licensing [is] subject to national discretion," which, in Clinton's case, means control over technology transfer is a thing of the past.

In a final blow to the anti-proliferation cause, Clinton has terminated "re-export" controls. This means that there is no longer any way to ensure that U.S. clients will not sell American technology to U.S. enemies. So now we have the ludicrous spectacle of Clinton issuing stern warnings to North Korea, Iran, and Iraq while destroying the best chance the West has had to keep the most dangerous technology in the world out of murderous hands.

Given Clinton's astonishing performance, it is hard to imagine that this administration will be able to forge an effective international program to control or combat the proliferation of deadly technologies. Counterproliferation was supposed to have been a centerpiece of Clinton's foreign policy, and Les Aspin originally promised that "hundreds of millions of dollars" would be spent on it. Nothing of the sort has happened; in FY93, only $40 million was allocated, and in '94 it was down to $25

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million. All this has chilled those few serious souls in the government who still care about such things. Some who seem to care are to be found on Capitol Hill, where, according to published reports, the likes of Senators Glenn, Nunn, McCain, Helms, and Bingaman were not happy with Clinton's moves, both because they were concerned about the consequences of the new policy and because they didn't learn about the president's decision until after the White House had announced it.

Nor were these senators impressed with the administration's defense of massive decontrol. Clinton spokesmen said it makes good economic sense, it will preserve and even create American jobs, and in the modern world it's not possible to control technology anyway. Some on the Hill suggested that if jobs are going to be created as a result of the decontrol of computer sales, they are more likely to be created in Singapore or Indonesia than in California or North Carolina. And others pointed out that, once American technological secrets have been sold to the rest of the world, we will inevitably lose market share to those who copy the technology and manufacture at lower cost. This, in fact, is precisely the cycle that launched Japan, Inc. many years ago, with its licenses to manufacture knock-offs of American inventions like television sets and VCRs.

Every bit of the lethal technology that Saddam Hussein obtained illegally can now be legally purchased by all but a tiny handful of pariah countries, and those bad guys can easily pick them up from third parties.

It is hard to imagine that the administration believes its own line. A few companies may make some money out of the wreckage of our technology security program, but it's certainly going to cost the country a lot, whether coping with stronger enemy armies and more dangerous terrorists, or simply with economic competitors who have gratefully accepted our secrets. It's hard to imagine that this very same administration, just a few months ago, was sternly warning our French allies to stop trying to steal our advanced technologies. Now they don't have to steal it; they can just buy the stuff.

So why did Clinton do it? The most likely answer is domestic politics. The leaders of the computer industry, especially the tycoons of Silicon Valley like Apple's John Sculley and Silicon Graphics' Edward McCracken, were among the first business leaders to endorse candidate Clinton. Sculley, who became a top adviser to Clinton, even lent one of Apple's vice-presidents, David Barram, to the campaign. Barram has since become deputy secretary of commerce, the number-two position in the department that largely determines export control policy. Barram's nomination followed the withdrawal of John Rollwagen, the CEO of supercomputer manufacturer Cray Research and a director of Apple. Once the election had been won, such people had easy access to the White House, and even to the president himself. When Clinton presented his economic program in February 1993, you may remember that Hillary watched intently, flanked by two of the most powerful men in Washington: Alan Greenspan and John Sculley.

Clinton may have been repaying a political debt to those who helped his presidential campaign. This would be deplorable—the national interest is supposed to take precedence over political paybacks—but not unique. But there may also be some more personal ties between the Clintons and the computer lobby. Back in 1991, Hillary Rodham Clinton was paid over $100,000 for work done on behalf of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, a bipartisan, non-profit group that sought to devise policies for more effective training of U.S. workers. The money actually came from a parent organization, the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), headed by none other than John Sculley.

There were some oddities about Mrs. Clinton's relationship to NCEE and the Commission. Most of the big shots involved in the project donated their time—former Senator Bill Brock, for example, was not paid for the considerable work he did on the Commission's behalf. The money Hillary received was not given directly to her, but was cycled through the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, where she was a partner. Most strangely, according to internal documents, the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce had finished its work in the spring of 1990, the year before Hillary was hired to provide it with her expert help. The director of NCEE told reporter Lou Dolinar of *Newsday* that he had intended from the very beginning of the project to have an "implementation phase" after the report was done, and that Hillary was hired for that purpose. But Dolinar points out that a Commission report written in April 1990 stated categorically that the Commission had held its "final meeting" on April 18. There was no mention of implementation.

Whatever the explanation, the NCEE story is one more link in the intimate ties between the Clintons and the computer industry. One need not believe that the computer lobby bought influence with the Clintons to be concerned about the warm embrace; such friendships inevitably influence policy decisions, even without the kind of high-pressure lobbying that McCracken and his colleagues directed at the Clinton White House to get their computers decontrolled. The combination of gratitude for multiple past favors, close personal ties, a mindset that puts short-term job creation ahead of the national security of the United States, and a foreign policy team that seemingly doesn't care about arming the world's thugs produced a foreign policy catastrophe of immense proportions. We shall be paying for it for a very long time, in dollars and in blood. ❐

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Robert D. Novak and Zelda Novak

Oh, What a Tangled Webb . . .

Who Webster Hubbell was.

Early last year, as the Senate prepared to consider President Clinton's nomination of his good friend Webster Hubbell for associate attorney general, the Judiciary Committee received a request from a Little Rock stockbroker named Roy Drew. Drew wanted to testify about what he considered a very peculiar stock transaction Hubbell had made with him a decade earlier. Drew wrote that it "is possible that Mr. Hubbell may have traded on the basis of insider information." By his own account, Drew was not interested in destroying his fellow townsman. Rather, he wanted to show the world a coziness between politicians and businessmen that was close to corruption—and to which the new president of the United States and his first lady were tightly linked.

The White House advised Sen. Joseph Biden, Judiciary's Democratic chairman, that Drew was well known back in Arkansas as an anti-Clinton pest. Sen. Orrin Hatch, the committee's ranking Republican, was not in a mood to cause trouble. So Drew was not called as a witness, and Hubbell received a free pass. The only hard questioning he faced was an exercise in trivia: his membership in the whites-only Country Club of Little Rock. (He agreed to resign.)

In fact, Hubbell was a proper subject for Senate scrutiny. He had arrived as one of the Rose Firm quartet, along with Hillary Rodham Clinton and two lawyers given senior positions at the White House, William Kennedy and Vincent Foster. Long before President-elect Clinton began his tortured search for an attorney general, he had decided on Hubbell to direct the Justice Department from behind the scenes. At least one prospective nominee for attorney general, Appeals Court Judge Patricia Wald, could not accept Hubbell's role as a pre-condition. Janet Reno could and did.

For many weeks before his confirmation, Hubbell was running the Justice Department, making controversial political decisions as the de facto Attorney General of the United States.

A year later, Hubbell was headed back to Little Rock, leaving the government in order—he said—to better defend himself against allegations by his former partners at the Rose Law Firm that he had played fast and loose on billings. Whatever his personal problems, Hubbell had gone from indispensable Clinton ally to inconvenient reminder of what is troubling about the Whitewater affair. Just before his Senate confirmation, he had hearkened back

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to his days as a University of Arkansas football player. "This is the plight of the offensive lineman," he said. "They remembered me for the only time my man beat me and sacked the quarterback in the Sugar Bowl. Quarterbacks and running backs are remembered for their achievements. Offensive linemen are remembered for their mistakes."

That self-portrait is now more apt than ever. In Washington, he is viewed, however dimly, as a slightly sinister figure who represents the unfortunate Clinton conjunction between personal affairs and government. In Little Rock, he is remembered fondly as a prototypical good old boy—football player, country clubber, regular fellow, distinguished citizen. On a visit to the Arkansas capital, we could find nobody—friend or foe—who would speak harshly of Webb Hubbell. Nothing better typifies the difficulty of transplanting to Washington the special culture of Little Rock.

The stock transaction that Roy Drew unsuccessfully tried to tell the Senate about is a case in point. On April 14, 1983, Hillary Rodham Clinton called Drew, then a broker with E.F. Hutton, to open up an account—to be named Midlife Investors—for her and her law partners Vincent Foster and Webster Hubbell. Five days later, Hubbell approached Drew with a different proposition. He asked Drew to open a personal brokerage account, instructing him to purchase 500 shares of Arkansas Louisiana Gas Corporation (Arkla) stock at $18.25. At the time, Thomas "Mack" McLarty, a friend of Hubbell and now White House chief of staff, served on Arkla's board, and was positioned to become the company's president.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, the committee's ranking Republican, was not in a mood to cause trouble. So Drew was not called as a witness, and Hubbell received a free pass.

Drew was puzzled by the purchase. Arkla, he told us, was a stock "that was normally bought by bank trust departments and people who wanted dividends." What's more, Hubbell was buying the stock in June, "at a time of year when they're not selling any gas." Drew became more suspicious when, the day after Hubbell's purchase, two other people sought to open up new accounts for the purpose of buying Arkla stock. One was Doug Buford, an attorney with the Little Rock firm of Wright, Lindsey and Jennings, McLarty's family firm, where Clinton worked in 1981 and 1982 when he was temporarily out of office. The other was Dr. R. Wayne Herbert, who was married to Kathlyn Graves, a partner at the same firm. Drew was reluctant to mention Buford and Herbert by name to Senate investigators and refused to tell us about his conversations with them.

On June 6, less than fifty days after his purchase, Hubbell sold 300 of his 500 shares of Arkla for $25.625—a meteoric jump for a regulated utility that had been poorly rated. This yielded $7,687.50 for a 40 percent profit.

On June 26, the *New York Times* published the first report that Arkla was "an attractive takeover target." On June 29, Sheffield Nelson, then chairman of Arkla, told the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* that Arkla had had takeover discussions. As a member of Arkla's board, McLarty would have been privy to this information prior to its release in the press.

On July 19, Hubbell sold the rest of the stock for $24.50, yielding a 34 percent return. That wound up a transaction with a neat profit of $3,462.50 on a $9,125 investment. Hubbell was never to make another trade on his account with Drew.

To Senate Judiciary staffers, Hubbell categorically denied ever trading on insider information. "What I think I told them when they asked why I bought the stock," Hubbell later told us in his deep, slow, rumbling tones, "I had seen the newspaper articles and I said that one of the possible reasons was that Mack [McLarty] was going to be president [of Arkla]. Because I have a lot of respect for Mack.

"I'll be honest. I don't know specifically why I bought that stock ten years ago. It could have been one of my brokers advising me to buy Arkla stock. It could have been my parents buying and saying it was good. There are a million reasons why I might have bought. I can't tell you why."

The explanation satisfied the Senate committee, but it also reinforced Hubbell's Washington image as a figure of mystery. Hubbell did nothing to dispel this image, preferring to work behind the scenes, granting few interviews to reporters curious about his undefined role as Justice Department liaison to the White House. When he submitted to an interview with the *Washington Post* upon his April 2 nomination as associate attorney general (nominally the number-three slot at Justice), it was only the second since he arrived in Washington. The first was to a colleague's nine-year-old daughter writing for her school newspaper.

Who was this man, totally new to Washington and national affairs, that the new president insisted on giving such great power and responsibility? After receiving an engineering degree from the University of Arkansas in 1970, where he was a star offensive tackle for a Sugar Bowl–bound Razorback team, Hubbell went on to law school and landed at the Rose Law Firm in 1973. There he was thrown into Little Rock's center of power, as the firm, including partner Hillary Rodham Clinton, became the place to go for those who had business with the state government.

Hubbell grew close to Bill and Hillary Clinton, as a frequent golfing partner and counselor of the governor. During his 1990 gubernatorial campaign, Clinton called Hubbell his "best friend." Such prominence and connections paved the way for Hubbell's ascent to three prestigious offices without having to run for election to any of them. In 1978, he was appointed to fill a vacancy on the City Board of Little Rock. At age 31, less than a year later, he was appointed mayor to fill out the term of his predecessor, who resigned

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after public protest over racist and sexist comments he had made. He achieved his third office, as chief justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court, by way of a six-month interim appointment from Gov. Clinton.

Hubbell did not seem to seize the reins of power with relish. Upon taking office as mayor, he said, "The term politician has a connotation that is not respected. I'm here, so I'm in politics, but I like to think that if you are honest and open then it can be an honorable pursuit." Shunning the limelight, Hubbell told a reporter, "I see the job as a ceremonial position. I don't plan on using the position in any way."

Personable and gentlemanly, Hubbell used his charm to get far in Little Rock. It eased over the occasional friction created by a one-party state, where business and politics are inextricably tied and conflicts of interest are perceived as inevitable. As one Little Rock attorney, a Republican, described it, "Arkansas has been done in by one political party ever since Reconstruction, and you're either in the machine or out of the machine. Webb certainly was in the machine."

"In Arkansas," he continued, "because the Democrats have been in power so long, they feel comfortable doing whatever they want to. . . . They know someone will cover up for them. It's like the good old boy network, but it's different—it's the Democratic Party."

As mayor, Hubbell took an active role in a campaign to remove billboards from Little Rock's streets, and pushed for a new convention center and athletic dome. But his role at the center of the great Little Rock cable television debate sheds more light on Hubbell the politician.

Hubbell presided over the selection of a cable television company to receive Little Rock's franchise. In the course of the selection process, the city's black leaders fought a losing battle against Stephens Inc., the gigantic Arkansas investment banking house, which thrives on a lax regulatory climate and a chummy relationship with government in Little Rock. Hubbell sided with Stephens, a client of the Rose Firm over the years. As a losing party in the cable debate put it, "Webb did the dirty work." In December 1978, Little Rock's city board of directors voted to award the franchise to Midwest American Cable Company, although that company was ranked fourth out of six bidders by a consultant hired by the city to help choose a cable franchise.

This provoked an outcry from Cablecom, the company ranked first by the consultant, which organized a successful petition drive to hold a referendum on the board's decision. The award to Midwest was defeated by a 56-44 percent margin, due largely to the efforts of the Little Rock Business and Community Development Consortium, a group of black leaders, who pointed out that Midwest was the only bidder that hadn't promised the Consortium a financial share of the franchise. In precincts where the Consortium campaigned most heavily, the ordinance was defeated by margins as high as 6 to 1.

In a strange twist, four days before the Board convened to vote for a second time, the Consortium endorsed the company they had campaigned against. They had reached an agreement whereby Midwest would pay the Consortium 2 percent of its annual gross revenues, sell them up to 15 percent of its stock, and pay the Consortium to train minority employees for the company. This was the most favorable arrangement offered to the Consortium, which attempted to negotiate deals with each of the original bidders. The only one to refuse to even come to the table with the black leaders was Riverside Cable Television. Storer Broadcasting Co., a Florida-based firm, was the majority owner of Riverside, but Stephens Inc. owned 14 percent of the company. Then–University of Arkansas coaches Lou Holtz (football) and Eddie Sutton (basketball) each owned 3 percent.

In their efforts to win the cable franchise Stephens Inc. promised to sell its Riverside stock within five years to Storer, and to donate the proceeds to Little Rock charities. Hours before the Little Rock board was to vote, each director received a letter from Jackson Stephens, the billionaire investment banker, promising that a nine-member committee would be formed to administer distribution of the funds to charities.

In a 4-3 vote, the board awarded the franchise to Riverside. Hubbell cast the deciding vote, explaining that he opposed Midwest's bid because they are "historically opposed to public access. I don't believe a leopard changes its spots overnight. I don't believe the deal with the Consortium gives them a new-found religion." Hubbell expressed reservations that Riverside had refused to negotiate with the group of black leaders, but noted that the company has "an excellent record in dealing with minorities." P.A. Hollingsworth, the attorney for the Consortium, cast the board's decision in a different light, saying that Jackson Stephens was presuming to have "better ideas for the black community than the black community itself." Herb Coleman, the convener of the Consortium, said, "From what the mayor [Hubbell] said, I think they felt they should give it to a company who knows what's better for this community than we do. And when that company decides, it will tell us."

In the end, Stephens Inc. indicated it believes charity begins at home, with the help of Hubbell's Rose Law Firm. In January 1985, Stephens secretly sold its Riverside stock for $2.7 million, and deposited the proceeds in Stephens's Worthen Bank and Trust Co. It was not until an article in the *Arkansas Democrat*, reporting on the secret sale, that Stephens moved to transfer the funds to various charities. The $2.7 million windfall had come just as the bank was stuck with a $52 million loss—a government securities investment with the New Jersey brokerage of Bevill, Bresler & Schulman Inc. went bust, and eventually led to the conviction of Bevill's officers on fraud counts. In the end it was not a bad investment for Stephens, which purchased its Riverside stock for a mere $14,000. Hubbell and the Rose Law Firm represented Worthen through the bank's rescue.

Yet Hollingsworth, the Consortium's attorney, today bears no resentment against Hubbell, and was prepared to testify in his behalf before the Judiciary Committee when Hubbell was battling charges of racism relating to his country club membership. He told us that while he was "really upset with what

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was going on" fourteen years ago, the issues involved were more complex than it might first appear. "The Stephens' influence had something to do with it, don't get me wrong," he said, "but there are always numerous factors involved."

Hollingsworth has known Hubbell as both a fellow interim appointment on the state supreme court and as a foe in litigation, where he found Hubbell to be "a tremendous lawyer." "All my experiences with him personally and professionally have been positive," Hollingsworth says. "I know I was disappointed in what Webb did, but it didn't change my overall impression of him. I've always held him in high regard."

After he finished his stint as mayor, and later as Clinton's appointed supreme court justice, Hubbell returned to private practice, in which he was often helpful to Bill Clinton. In 1987, Clinton appointed him to the state's ethics commission, where he participated in the drafting of a state ethics law that excluded the governor from any conflict-of-interest disclosure requirement, but that gave Hubbell a reputation as an expert on government ethics.

In 1990, as a lawyer with the Rose firm, Hubbell helped Clinton in his re-election campaign against Republican Sheffield Nelson. Gov. Clinton decided to reopen hearings held seven years before, to investigate whether Nelson, then-chairman of Arkla, had engaged in a "sweetheart deal" by selling drilling rights to his friend, Jerry Jones of Arkoma Production Corporation (who later became the owner of the Dallas Cowboys).

In 1983, Clinton instructed the Arkansas Public Service Commission to conduct a study evaluating the impact of the Arkla-Arkoma deal on ratepayers. That study found that there would be no adverse effect. Nonetheless, Clinton in 1990 reopened the Arkla-Arkoma study, appointing as commissioners three of his own political supporters. The hearings then were broadcast on Storer Cable's public-access channel with the help of Webb Hubbell, who, at the request of a former head of Stephens's Worthen Bank, made the arrangements for the televised broadcast.

The Stephens family supported Nelson's opponent in the Republican primary, Rep. Tommy Robinson, but endorsed Clinton's candidacy when Nelson was nominated. Hubbell's client, Gene Fortson, a former head of Worthen Bank, told the Associated Press that he had hired Hubbell to arrange to have the hearings taped for broadcast. Hubbell denied to the Little Rock press that he had anything to do with the arrangement, but conceded that his firm was hired to sign up a video production company.

Fortson told us he has no recollection of the events of three-and-a-half years ago. "Right now I'm drawing a total blank," he said. "I don't remember any lawyer being involved. . . . I was trying to call [Storer's] attention to that to get it broadcast on their public access station. I thought it would be nice if the public could see it because it was an issue during the primary."

Inevitably, and fatefully, Hubbell became involved in the Clintons' investment in the Whitewater Development Company and its association with failed Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan. After federal regulators took over Madison in 1989, Hubbell was hired by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in a malpractice suit against Madison's auditors, Frost and Co.

The owner of Madison, James McDougal, was a business partner in Whitewater with Hubbell's law partner Hillary Clinton, who had represented the thrift before state regulators. In addition, Hubbell's father-in-law, Seth Ward, had failed to pay back most of $1.15 million in loans from Madison for a questionable land deal. Hubbell did not tell the regulators about his connection with Ward, despite his involvement in procuring a loan that ensured that Ward would not be liable for repayment.

When federal regulators learned of Hubbell's connection to Ward, they secured a letter from him stating that "I have not represented Mr. Seth Ward in connection with any issue or matter relating to his disputes with Madison Guaranty," and a pledge to refrain from representing Ward. But according to Ward's lawyer, only four months later Hubbell advised his father-in-law of the existence of a contract in Ward's Madison loan that eventually netted Ward $400,000, money that he was eventually forced to hand over to the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC).

This method of doing business was brought to Washington when Hubbell was installed at the Justice Department to represent the interests of his client, Bill Clinton. He quickly jumped in to deal with the government's six-year-old prosecution of Rep. Harold Ford of Memphis, an 18-year black Democratic congressman and member of the Ways and Means Committee, on charges of accepting $1.2

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million for political favors. In 1990, a federal judge ordered a retrial for Ford, after a Memphis jury deadlocked along racial lines, and determined that Ford's appeals to racial solidarity eliminated the prospect of a fair trial. Jury selection for the second trial took place in mostly-white Jackson, producing a panel of eleven whites and one black.

In February 1993, Jesse Jackson and Ford, in separate meetings with White House aides, appealed for Justice Department intervention. Hubbell helped out. He arranged a meeting with members of the Congressional Black Caucus and acting attorney general Stuart Gerson, a Bush holdover. The following day Gerson announced the Justice Department's decision to dismiss the jury.

U.S. Attorney Edward Bryant resigned in disgust. "The whole concept of a congressman being able to call into play this kind of power to intervene and affect an ongoing trial . . . is totally, totally improper," said Bryant. U.S. District Judge Jerome Turner denied the Justice Department requests, calling the actions "repugnant to this court's sense of justice." Justice reversed itself, and the trial continued—resulting in Ford's acquittal.

In Little Rock, he is remembered fondly as a prototypical good old boy—football player, country clubber, regular fellow, distinguished citizen. On a visit to the Arkansas capital, we could find nobody—friend or foe—who would speak harshly of Webb Hubbell.

The Ford intervention was followed by Hubbell's unprecedented order that all U.S. attorneys resign and leave their posts, even before a successor had been found. Hubbell denied that in calling for the resignations of the U.S. attorneys he was trying to suppress the investigation of corruption charges against House Ways and Means chairman Dan Rostenkowski. But the call did summarily remove Jay Stephens as U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, and set the Rostenkowski proceedings—then on the brink of indictment—back to square one.

Among the others bounced was the Republican-appointed assistant U.S. attorney in Little Rock, whose jurisdiction covered any inquiries into the Clintons' Arkansas days, including the investigation of Madison Guaranty. In his place, Clinton appointed Paula Casey, a former law student of his at the University of Arkansas Law School in Fayetteville, who later worked on Clinton's campaigns.

On October 8, 1993, the RTC sent Casey nine criminal referrals regarding its investigation of Madison. On November 1, Casey threw them out in a letter to the RTC, citing "insufficient information . . . to warrant the initiation of a criminal investigation." The media's interest in Whitewater peaked with Casey's actions, and she was forced to recuse herself from the investigation when her personal ties to Clinton were revealed.

Even with Attorney General Reno confirmed and on board, Hubbell remained the driver at Justice's wheel. It was Hubbell, not Reno, whom Clinton turned to after the fire at the Branch Davidian compound. In an interview with NBC shortly afterwards, Reno insisted that she was accountable for the FBI's raid, but admitted that, in the aftermath, she had not spoken to the president. Nonetheless, Reno said, the president had "had a direct conversation with Webb Hubbell."

Reno learned to be less candid, but there was no doubt Hubbell was in the inner circle. President Clinton went to Hot Springs, Arkansas, on February 12-13, ostensibly to visit the husband of his late mother, and brought along Hubbell to play golf. The conclusion in Washington, correct or not, was that the president was down there to check out documents that might bear on Whitewater, and that he had brought along his lawyer.

But the Whitewater tide was running against Hubbell. The furor did not reflect well on the Rose Law Firm's already tarnished image. In a move that would result in Hubbell's eventual resignation, the firm went public with claims that Hubbell had overbilled clients and the firm for personal expenses and that he had caused the firm to absorb $500,000 in expenses incurred by his unsuccessful representation on a contingency-fee basis of POM, Inc., owned by his brother-in-law Seth "Skeeter" Ward. (Hubbell is a convenient scapegoat. Largely overlooked is Hillary Rodham Clinton's own involvement in Hubbell's representation of POM, Inc. The first lady's name appears under Hubbell's in a legal document relating to the case.)

With FDIC and RTC investigations of possible conflict-of-interest violations at Rose underway, the firm is in danger of losing its lucrative business with the federal government, which accounts for about 40 percent of its total billings, according to legal experts. In tossing Hubbell to the wolves, the Rose firm could hope to maintain that business, and avoid punitive action by the feds that could prove fatal to the firm.

From the Clintons' standpoint, Hubbell had changed from an indispensable fix-it man at Justice to a net embarrassment. But in Little Rock, people who knew Hubbell, partisans and opponents alike, profess themselves shocked and incredulous at Hubbell's alleged ethical violations. A Little Rock attorney describes Hubbell, a long-time friend, as "one of the finest men I've ever known, who doesn't lie, cheat, or steal. His life has been too good not to benefit from the benefit of the doubt."

Former Republican Gov. Frank White, who defeated Clinton for re-election in 1980 and then lost to him in 1982, considers Hubbell "a very competent attorney," who was "well-thought of—a low-profile person who didn't

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throw his weight around, and who never did anything that raised any ethical questions." This interpretation is echoed by other Hubbell acquaintances, including a Little Rock consultant who said, "I never agreed with Webster Hubbell's politics, but I never thought he was a crook. I'd be shocked if he's a crook, and I'd be shocked to think he sent out a dishonest bill."

In Little Rock, Hubbell was viewed as destined for greatness. During the 1992 presidential campaign, he was discussed seriously as a possible nominee for attorney general as a stepping stone for the United States Supreme Court. A friend who sees loyalty to Clinton as his downfall, says he hopes Hubbell's reputation will be "restored," adding: "He has an apparent willingness to take all the gunfire on himself. I hope that his character is recognized, whether we question the wisdom of his loyalty, I hope his courage in absorbing the blows himself is recognized and applauded."

But Hubbell won little applause in Washington. When last year he granted us a brief interview restricted to accusations of insider training, his calm demeanor broke momentarily and he bristled when we asked him about his answers to Senate Judiciary Committee questions:

> HUBBELL: Can I ask you a question? I thought, and I may be wrong, but whatever I told the Senate committee was supposed to be confidential. Is that true?
> NOVAK: Yes, sir.
> HUBBELL: So, they told you?
> NOVAK: Well, I found out.
> HUBBELL: I don't mind. But I thought there was a rule that the Senate was not supposed to talk about—
> NOVAK: I didn't say they told me, but I found out.
> HUBBELL: Somebody talked to you. I mean I'm not upset about it, I'm just curious who told you.

He clearly did not appreciate how the inquiring press functions. He yearned for the closed world of Little Rock, where secrets were secrets and the lines between politics and business were fuzzy. That sounded like the real Webster Hubbell. ❐

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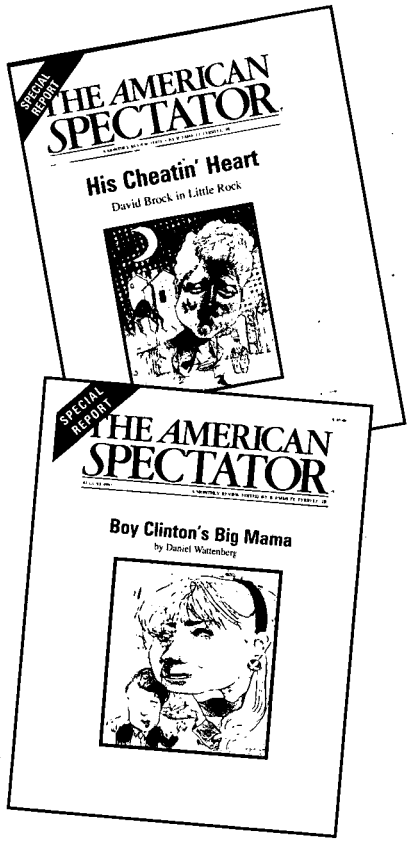

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David Brock

The Travelgate Cover-Up

Hillary Clinton, Vincent Foster, David Watkins, William Kennedy, Harry Thomason, Patsy Thomasson, Betta Carney, Catherine Cornelius, Clarissa Cerda, Darnell Martens, Penny Sample, Larry Herman, George Stephanopoulos, Bernard Nussbaum, Mack McLarty, Jeff Eller, Joseph Gangloff, David Margolis, John Podesta, Philip Heymann, the IRS, the GAO, and FBI agent Tom Carl.

I.

By now, the plot lines are familiar: abuse of government power to benefit campaign contributors; violations of conflict-of-interest laws; a review conducted to deflect, not resolve, legitimate questions; improper contacts with independent law-enforcement agencies; efforts to deceive the press; a compromised Justice Department; and, at the center of the muck, with her "strong moral compass," Hillary Rodham Clinton.

No, this isn't a story about influence-peddling and sleazy deal-making fifteen years ago in Arkansas. It's a story about influence-peddling and sleazy deal-making one year ago in the Clinton White House.

Specifically, it is the full story of Travelgate. The plan to replace the White House travel office with a hand-picked travel agency, World Wide Travel of Little Rock, was hatched shortly after the 1992 election. But it was rooted in long-standing political and business relationships in Arkansas. The full extent of these connections has never been explored, despite an internal White House Review in July 1993 and last month's whitewash of the affair by Congress's General Accounting Office. A second look at the scandal reveals an array of hidden agendas and payback schemes implicating the president and—especially—the first lady more directly in Travelgate than has been previously established. It gives the lie to Bill Clinton's post-Whitewater defense that he has never been accused of abusing the office of the presidency. And it places in sharp relief the possible reasons behind deputy White House counsel Vincent Foster's suicide last July.

On May 19, 1993, David Watkins, assistant to the president for management and administration, met with the seven staffers of the White House office that arranges air travel for staff and charters planes for the White House press corps. Watkins—the key player in Travelgate, and, strangely, the only one to have been spared press scrutiny—told the startled group, many of whom had served for twenty years, that they were summarily fired. No mention was made of allegations of criminality or of an FBI investigation. Watkins made them surrender their White House passes and ordered them off the premises within an hour. As security stood by, the humiliated seven cleared out their belongings and were escorted from the building like accused criminals. It wasn't until they read the papers over the next few mornings that they realized they *were* accused criminals.

Though often identified as "career" employees, the Travelgate Seven, like most White House staff, served at the pleasure of the president. Such employees are permanent staff only by tradition, not by right, and the Clintons apparently think nothing of indulging their whims by replacing White House

David Brock is the author of The Real Anita Hill *(Free Press), now in paperback, and an investigative writer for* TAS. *Matt Labash helped in the research for this article.*

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ushers, telephone operators, correspondence clerks, and chefs. Such low-level house-cleaning is unprecedented: the well-mannered Bushes, for instance, dutifully ate food they didn't like for two years before the Reagans' cook quit voluntarily.

But screwing over the "little people" is the Clintons' prerogative. One might even say *pastime*, for a curious aspect of the affair is why the White House didn't simply obtain the staffers' resignations without going to the trouble of smearing them as crooks. According to associates of the seven, if they had been allowed to quit with dignity—which would have meant little more than two weeks' notice and a perfunctory going-away party in the Indian Treaty Room—they would have left without a fuss.

But that was not to be. Instead, they would be ruined, Arkansas-style.

II.

World Wide Travel was originally owned by the Worthen Bank, which is in turn controlled by the all-powerful Stephens family. In 1979, Stephens Inc. was forced to sell the agency when the Federal Reserve Board ruled that banks had to divest themselves of their travel services, but Stephens arranged for it to be bought by its manager, Betta Carney. By 1993, World Wide was the twenty-fourth largest U.S. travel agency, with annual business of $158 million.

In the mid-1970s, Watkins, who ran the Worthen-owned Advertising Associates, Inc., became a major client of Carney's, and vice-versa. Meanwhile, both Watkins and Carney forged relationships with Mack McLarty, now White House chief of staff, who became chief executive officer of the Stephens-owned Arkla Gas Company in the early 1980s. McLarty was a World Wide client, as is Stephens Inc., and Wal-Mart, on whose board of directors Hillary Rodham Clinton sat. World Wide still banks with Worthen and until 1990 had its corporate offices in the Worthen Bank Building; and Hillary's Rose law firm has represented Worthen for years.

Watkins's ad agency produced many of the advertising spots for Clinton's gubernatorial campaigns. Watkins, his wife and family members, and the Watkins Company, a closely held consulting firm he owns, and Carney and her family and her travel agency, all have been financial supporters of Clinton's candidacies over the years, typically "bundling" their contributions to end-run campaign finance laws.

Carney made well over $1 million as the Clinton presidential campaign's travel agent, in a contract arranged on a non-competitive basis by Watkins, who by then was the deputy manager and chief financial officer of the campaign. Though the arrangement was not disclosed in either the White House Review or the GAO audit, according to a 1992 report in *Travel Weekly*, World Wide did the Clinton campaign a big favor: it agreed to bill the campaign based on the amount of money it was taking in, rather than on the money it was spending. A portion of the campaign's travel debts was thereby deferred until federal matching funds started pouring in.

The agency also adopted an unusual billing policy for journalists. When members of the press fly on a candidate's chartered aircraft, the campaign bills them a pro-rated fare plus 10 percent. World Wide required journalists to charge their tickets *in advance*, and made sure that those funds were wired back into the campaign's coffers within a few days. The campaign, which spent an estimated $100,000 a week chartering planes, also tried to force the Secret Service to pay immediately; the government, of course, never pays on time, and this was an early source of friction between the Secret Service and the Clinton people.

The arrangement enabled the campaign to instantly pump cash into advertising in crucial races in Michigan and Illinois; the money would otherwise have been only a ledger entry in accounts receivable for weeks. *Travel Weekly* quoted Watkins as saying that "were it not for World Wide Travel here, the Arkansas governor may never have been in contention for the highest office in the land."

As security stood by, the humiliated seven cleared out their belongings and were escorted from the building like accused criminals. It wasn't until they read the papers over the next few mornings that they realized they were *accused criminals.*

Clearly, someone owed World Wide. According to the *Washington Times*, by the time Clinton locked up the nomination, Carney was already secretly analyzing the White House travel office operation. Two weeks after the election, Steve Davison, director of customer service for World Wide, was quoted in a little-noticed *Arkansas Business* article as saying that "World Wide is studying the possibilities of opening an office in Washington, D.C. to handle travel plans for Clinton's staff when he becomes president," arrangements that had historically been handled by the White House travel office. Shortly after the campaign, Carney's agency was rewarded with the Democratic National Committee's travel business.

Contrary to the later White House spin that problems in the travel office cropped up in a routine audit in late spring 1993, the takeover of the travel office had been decided on the previous summer; the only question was how to effect it.

III.

Betta Carney and David Watkins enlisted 25-year-old Catherine Cornelius, a fellow Arkansan who served as the liaison between the Clinton campaign and World Wide and whose great-grandmother was a sister of Clinton's great-grandfather. Cousin Catherine was told to come up with a rationale for gutting the current travel office and assuming the same role in the White House that she had played in the campaign. Interestingly, Clinton aide Jeff Eller, who had a "close personal relationship" with Cornelius, according to the White

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House Review, was already telling reporters in December 1992 that there were unspecified "problems" in the travel office and that he would not be surprised if some people got fired.

That month, Cornelius and representatives from World Wide met in Little Rock with Watkins (now a transition official) to discuss strategy for World Wide's takeover of the travel operation. Cornelius sent Watkins a detailed memo dated December 31, 1992, arguing that "privatizing" the White House travel office would let Clinton fulfill his campaign promise to reduce White House personnel and make it easier to get discounted airfares. Additional revenue would be generated through a rebate scheme in which 3.5 percent of the agency's 10-percent commission on tickets (which the airlines had kept under the old system) would be rebated to the White House Travel Account. Cornelius estimated that on a travel budget of nearly $6 million a year, this would yield a $210,000 rebate. Cornelius failed to point out that the remaining 6.5 percent (or $390,000 a year) would go right into World Wide's coffers. Cornelius proposed that the White House short-circuit regular procedures and select the private contractor itself.

In a January 26, 1993 memo to Watkins (now a top assistant to the president), Cornelius explicitly proposed that she and Clarissa Cerda, who had supervised the campaign's early-billing operation, could perform the functions of the White House travel office working with World Wide. Watkins quickly named both Cornelius and Cerda to his White House staff as assistants, with the apparent intention of moving them to the travel office at a propitious moment.[1] While the authorship of the memo creates the appearance that Cornelius was initiating the plan, Cornelius told GAO auditors that Watkins requested this memo and a subsequent one. Watkins denied this to the GAO.

On February 15, Cornelius and Cerda presented Watkins with a document called "The White House Travel Office: Briefing Book and Proposal." The document envisioned giving Clinton loyalists control of all White House travel functions, including keeping the manifest of Air Force One—Watkins at the helm, with the two "co-directors of travel," Cornelius and Cerda, working under him. One has to wonder if the Clintons' oft-stated concern for "privacy" was not a factor in placing trusted aides in jobs where only they would know who slipped on and off Air Force One.

Despite press accounts focusing on the conniving Cornelius, Watkins orchestrated events. Though he would later tell White House investigators that he never intended "to review or modify the current White House travel operation in the near term," all the documentation belies his denials. If he never intended to review the operation, why did Cornelius's January 26 memo contain explicit descriptions of her discussions with him on the matter? If he never intended to modify the operation, why was he meeting with World Wide in the first place? If, as he later maintained, he put the Cornelius-Cerda briefing book "in a file and I never read it," why did he begin implementing its plans shortly after he received it?

[1] Both Clarissa Cerda and her brother Jose Cerda work in the White House. After the travel office fiasco, she was reassigned to the White House counsel's office where she is an assistant counsel to the president. In the spring of 1993, she was also one of those White House employees implicated in a double-dipping arrangement, whereby she was paid for a time by both the White House and the Clinton transition.

IV.

Meanwhile, apparently tipped off by Carney and Cornelius, another group of close associates began maneuvering for a piece of the White House business.

Penny Sample, whose Air Advantage company had brokered charter planes to the campaign for World Wide, was eager to perform the same service for the White House press corps. Sample's boyfriend, Darnell Martens, was president of a small Cincinnati-based aviation consulting firm that had done billing and consulting for Air Advantage. Martens had chartered "Air Elvis," the airplane that transported Clinton and his aides during the presidential race.

Martens's firm, Thomason, Richland & Martens (TRM), was co-owned by Martens; Hollywood producer Harry Thomason, a longtime Arkansas friend of the Clintons; and Dan Richland, the agent of Thomason's wife Linda Bloodworth-Thomason. (TRM now does business under the name Harry Thomason & Associates.)

The Clintons were even more beholden to the Thomasons than to Betta Carney. The garish couple hosted many Hollywood fundraisers for Clinton, and their production company donated $60,000 to the Democratic National Committee. In 1992, the Thomasons went to extraordinary lengths to make film editors, cameramen, make-up artists, and wardrobe people, as well as studio facilities and equipment from their TV shows, available for Clinton campaign videos, according to a recent report in the *Los Angeles Times*. Individuals like the Thomasons are free to volunteer their services to campaigns on a virtually unrestricted basis. But the *Times* suggested that the Thomasons' television shows may have picked up the tab for some of these services, a possible violation of federal election laws limiting corporate contributions. (In response to written questions from *The American Spectator*, Thomason's Washington super-lawyer, Robert Bennett, said: "There have been no violations of campaign laws.")

After the election, Thomason helped choreograph the Clinton inaugural and consulted on staging presidential events. Though he received no formal appointment, he may have been a "special government employee," and thus subject to conflict-of-interest laws. He was given a White House pass and an East Wing office, and received telephone calls and messages and faxes at the White House, according to White House sources. In early February, he began to make discreet inquiries about the travel office. He asked Dee Dee Myers if the White House charter business was open for competitive bidding, and Myers said she thought it was. During a phone conversation with Darnell Martens, Thomason suggested that Martens call Myers to follow up. Myers, perhaps naively, referred Martens to Billy Dale, the long-time travel office director who would soon become one of the Travelgate Seven.

The Review described Martens as merely being "interested in helping Air Advantage," and he and Thomason have main-

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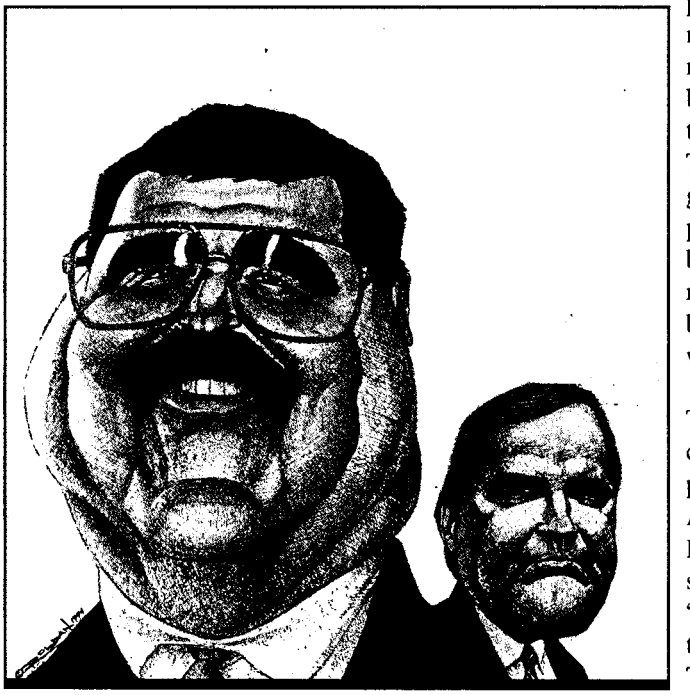
tained that they were not seeking business for themselves. The GAO, however, found that Thomason "made inquiries about obtaining Travel Office business on behalf of Mr. Martens, his business partner." The charter account is worth about $40,000 a day, and a commission would go to the brokers off the top. TRM and Air Advantage had a contractual relationship during the 1992 campaign.

Martens wrote a memorandum for his files about the Dale telephone call that indicates he was in fact seeking White House business for TRM.[2] Martens referred to an interest in "earning" White House business for TRM and conveyed his frustration that Dale "refuses to discuss business opportunities with legitimate charter operators." But Martens's company was a charter *broker*, not a charter operator, and the White House already had a charter broker—the travel office itself. It was clearly the brokerage Dale was referring to when, according to the memo, he was adamant that there was "no chance" the White House would change its current operations. (Later, as the White House flailed about trying to control the spin, Dee Dee Myers would say that TRM was not even in the business of brokering.)



Martens made a case for replacing the current charter airline, UltrAir—formerly Airline of the Americas (AOA), which had been founded by ex-Pan Am executives using Pan Am's old planes after Pan Am's bankruptcy in 1991. (This portion of the memo, titled "Research Information," hardly seems intended only for Martens's files. For one, it refers to Martens in the third person. For another, Harry Thomason later had it faxed to Watkins as factual evidence against Dale's operation.) Martens charged that UltrAir flew the press corps on "a virtually exclusive basis." (The actual figure was 66 percent of the White House charter business, and several charter operators told me the White House business was competitively bid.) But Martens's major indictment was political, playing to a now well-established anti-Republican paranoia in the Oval Office:

> Airline of the Americas is a Republican-operated charter airline. The company ran into controversy during the presidential campaign when it provided press transportation without chargebacks to the press in order to insure good press coverage of Bush campaign appearances. AOA wanted the flights to be considered a contribution but this was denied by the FEC/DOT subsequent to a complaint initiated by David Buxbaum of the Clinton/Gore '92 Committee. The uncompensated flights were discontinued to the satisfaction of the concerned government agencies. This activity by AOA does, however, indicate a decidedly anti-Clinton philosophy which seems, on the surface, to be inconsistent with the current administration. Further, this activity had to have been operated with the full knowledge and cooperation of the White House Travel Service Department since all flights dealt with following President Bush.

These charges, too, appear unfounded. In a sworn affidavit filed in connection with a libel suit against Harry Thomason, Charles Caudle, one of AOA's founding shareholders, maintained that it never flew any White House charter flights for less than normal quoted charter rates, nor did the airline ever provide free transportation for members of the press. There is no record of any complaint being filed against AOA with the FEC or the Department of Transportation regarding allegations of free trips for the press. During White House briefings on Travelgate, reporters appeared positively baffled by the charge that they were given free trips.[3]

Martens went back to Thomason and held at least two conversations—one on the telephone, and one in person in Los Angeles—complaining of Dale's reaction. In these conversations, Martens passed on "rumors" of corruption in the travel office. Shortly thereafter, Thomason brought the matter up with Clinton himself, telling the president in late March that he thought there was "trouble" in the White House travel office.

Within a few days of the Thomason-Clinton conversation, Thomason called Watkins and told him of the corruption rumors he'd heard. Watkins next

[2] The Martens memo was eventually released to the press by the White House after it was leaked by one of the travel office veterans, apparently by Dale, who had somehow got hold of both the Cornelius-Cerda memo and the Martens memo, after it was faxed to Watkins at the White House. All the memos referred to in this article were released as exhibits to the White House Review.

[3] Caudle resigned as AOA's chief executive officer before the travel office controversy. He is suing Thomason for $80 million for libel for disseminating false rumors of kickbacks about UltrAir that he alleges caused an FBI probe, and causing the publication of false and damaging material from the Martens memo, which surfaced in the press as Caudle was negotiating a deal to start another airline. Thomason has countered that Caudle has misrepresented his role in Travelgate. He said the memo in question was written by Martens, never mentioned Caudle, and was published months after Caudle had left AOA. The case will be heard in U.S. District Court in Washington.

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dispatched Cornelius to work in the travel office for several weeks and report back to him by May 15 on her observations. That is, Cornelius was planted in the office to substantiate rumors that she not only had an interest in fanning but had helped originate in the first place. Once on the scene, she began eavesdropping on conversations. She put out the word that some travel office workers were living above their means, implying that funds were being embezzled or kicked back from the charter companies. According to sources familiar with the situation, her concerns focused on one employee who owned a cabin on some $10-an-acre property near Virginia's Lake Anna and a $6,000 pontoon boat—hardly high living. Cornelius also secretly photocopied travel office documents and squirreled them away until she got caught by colleagues one day when a check accidentally jammed the copier. The travel office people then locked up the files on her, making it impossible for Cornelius to return the papers.

On May 12, Watkins and Cornelius met with Thomason and Darnell Martens in the White House to discuss the situation. The Martens memo was faxed from his Cincinnati office. With no hard evidence of any wrongdoing by the current employees, Cornelius called Betta Carney and told her to prepare to send staffers to Washington to take over the travel operation, because the staff was about to be fired. One World Wide official flew in the next day. Cornelius disclosed to the GAO that Watkins ordered her to make the call. Though the White House Review did not disclose this, perhaps because it would contradict the line that TRM was not seeking White House business, on May 12 Martens applied for a White House pass, according to the GAO.

But Watkins, Cornelius, and Thomason did not have the ability to execute the purge and cover it up. A scandal involving a rather petty scheme to reward a network of cronies with a federal contract would now become a scandal about the use of the police powers of the government for political purposes.

V.

Hillary Clinton had seen to it that such a frightening abuse was possible by constructing an iron triangle at the outset of the administration: the White House; the counsel's office (headed by her mentor from the Watergate period, Bernard Nussbaum and staffed by former Rose associates Vince Foster and William Kennedy); and the Justice Department (run, de facto, by her former law partner Webb Hubbell).

Later on May 12, Watkins, Cornelius, and Harry Thomason met again, this time with deputy counsel Foster. Watkins and Cornelius passed on their allegations about the travel office, though they likely held back the fact that both Cornelius and Thomason had direct interests in disseminating the allegations. (In a subsequent conversation, according to the Review, then–White House Communications Director George Stephanopoulos asked Thomason whether he had any financial interest in any company bidding on White House work, and Thomason denied it. But the very *asking* of the question seems incriminating: Why would Stephanopoulos suspect that, of all the thousands of travel companies in the country, it was Thomason's that stood to profit?)

Associate counsel William Kennedy joined Foster in a second meeting with the trio. What came next was a reprise of Rose Law Firm days, where Foster had been the brains and Kennedy had gained a reputation as the firm's bully, its bad cop. Foster asked Kennedy to contact the FBI about initiating an investigation of the office. With this, Foster drew the FBI and the Justice Department into the plan to get rid of the travel office workers by ginning up a criminal probe. Late that day, Kennedy contacted FBI agent Jim Bourke for the first time. The next morning, May 13, Bourke called Kennedy, who demanded to know—"within 15 minutes"—what the FBI was going to do. Otherwise, Kennedy warned, he would call in the IRS.

That threat seemed to move things along. Two very senior agents in the criminal division, Howard Apple and Pat Foran, went to the White House to meet with Kennedy following what Apple described to the GAO as a "nebulous and cryptic" telephone call from Kennedy. Apple said he told Kennedy that if normal procedure were followed, the matter would be referred to the FBI's Washington Metropolitan Field Office or even the local police rather than involve FBI unit chiefs. But Kennedy was adamant. The atmosphere at the White House was tense. "Apple also recalls Kennedy indicating that the matter was being directed or followed at the highest levels of the White House," the Review said. "Kennedy does not recall making this statement, but does recall indicating that his superiors—Foster and Watkins—were looking over his shoulder." (Interestingly, the GAO quotes Apple as saying he was told by Kennedy "that the matter was '*directed* at the highest levels' of the White House." [Emphasis added.])

Kennedy told the agents of "rumors" about lavish lifestyles among travel office personnel. Apple was clearly unimpressed, telling Kennedy he needed more information before deciding whether to investigate, according to the GAO. Apple and Foran then consulted with their boss, Daniel Coulson, a deputy assistant director of the FBI.

Coulson sent a second team of senior agents, Richard Wade, the chief of the governmental fraud unit, and Tom Carl, a supervisor in that unit, to meet with Kennedy. "According to Wade and Carl, Kennedy indicated that the Travel Office was a matter of some urgency and that it was being followed at high or the highest levels at the White House," according to the Review.

The key meetings came next, when Wade, Carl, and Kennedy met first with Foster. The FBI agents told the White House lawyers that insufficient grounds existed for an investigation. Cornelius, who had returned to her home to retrieve the travel office documents, was then summoned, and she told the FBI of a small amount of checks made out to cash that were not accounted for and unsubstantiated stories about kickbacks. Pressure from the White House and Cornelius's junior-league sleuthing led to a decision to open a criminal investigation. The White House Review portrayed the decision to investigate as an indepen-

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dent judgment reached by the FBI: "Following this conversation [with Cornelius]," the Review reported, "[Wade and Carl] determined there were grounds for further investigation," On May 14, the day after this determination, Carl briefed three Justice Department lawyers: Joe Gangloff; Jerry McDowell; and Jack Keeny, a deputy assistant attorney general. "None raised an objection," the Review reported.

But four days before the Review was released, William Sessions, then the embattled director of the FBI, painted a different picture in a letter dated June 28, 1993, sent in response to inquiries from Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole. Dole placed the text of the letter in the *Congressional Record* on July 14, 1993. But by then, media interest in the story had waned, and its contents have never been written about.

To rebut the charge that the FBI had been manipulated for political ends, Sessions maintained that the Justice Department had made the final call:

> The final determination that there was sufficient predication to initiate a criminal investigation was made by Mr. Gangloff [then the acting chief of the department's public integrity section] after being briefed by SSA Carl. . . . Authorization [for subsequent White House-FBI contacts] was based on previously detailed discussion within the FBI and the *decision by DOJ* that sufficient predication existed to initiate a criminal investigation. [Emphasis added.]

Regardless of who actually made the decision, the FBI and the Justice Department don't usually act so quickly in determining that a criminal investigation should be initiated—in this case, either on the very day of, or one day after, the first face-to-face meeting with White House officials. It hardly seems possible that none of the lawyers involved realized that White House encouragement of a criminal investigation would set off alarm bells if it were ever disclosed.

The Clinton administration's own review, in fact, contains a long footnote regarding post-Watergate policy concerning White House contacts with the Department of Justice or the FBI on pending investigations. The general principle set forth by the Carter administration and reaffirmed by each subsequent administration is that White House contacts with law enforcement agencies on civil or criminal investigations should go through the counsel's office and the contact should be made only at the highest levels of the Justice Department (through either the attorney general or the deputy attorney general).

In reviewing the Kennedy call to the FBI, the White House Review noted that while contacts on *pending* criminal cases are barred, Kennedy was reporting a *potentially* criminal matter. There was no clear prohibition on discussing this subject matter, and so it was not technically "improper."

Yet this was a hair-splitting distinction, as even the White House seemed to recognize. On February 22, Bernard Nussbaum had issued a memo reiterating the Bush administration's guidelines that inquiries on pending criminal or civil investigations must go through the attorney general or the deputy. On May 25, however, in the midst of the Travelgate firestorm, Nussbaum amended the policy in a new memo, this time requiring that all future calls to the FBI or Justice from the White House regarding even potential criminal matters be routed only through top DOJ officials.

That appeared to be a tightening of the restrictions. But Nussbaum also made a sly change: Previously, only the top two officials could be contacted; now, the third-ranking official, Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell, was included as well. In other words, the next time the White House wanted to exert influence on a potential or pending case, it wouldn't get into the fix it found itself in with Travelgate. Next time, Kennedy could just call Hubbell.

VI.

Apparently already realizing the terrible impropriety of having asked Kennedy to call on the FBI on May 12, the next day Vince Foster, consulting with Watkins and Patsy Thomasson (who works under Watkins as an assistant to the president and is no relation to Harry Thomason), came up with a strategy to conceal the activities of White House staff vis-à-vis the FBI, while at the same time hiding the involvement of Clinton friends in the travel office firings: a two-pronged cover-up.

A quick financial audit of the travel office would be undertaken as the ostensible basis for the decision by the FBI and the Justice Department to open an investigation—which would serve as the ostensible basis for installing Clinton cronies in the travel office. The press would be told that an audit had suddenly turned up credible allegations of wrongdoing; a criminal probe had then been ordered; and the decision had been made to fire the travel office employ-

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ees. This exactly reversed the sequence of what had actually happened.

Unless the audit was intended only to conceal that the White House was the source demanding a criminal investigation, there was no legitimate need for an audit, since the matter had already been raised to the level of potential criminality. Sessions seemed to reveal as much in his letter to Dole, who had asked what the FBI agents recommended to Kennedy as a course of action on May 13: "No course of action was recommended to Mr. Kennedy. He was advised that the FBI was only authorized to conduct criminal investigations." From this reply it can be inferred that Kennedy and Foster had asked the FBI to do an audit, and that the FBI refused.

Normally, if credible allegations had been raised and a decision made to investigate, the FBI would have moved in and sealed the office. But in this case, there were no credible allegations—the investigation was being done because the White House demanded it. Thus the investigation would have to be delayed until a middle step could be invented.

As luck had it, an auditor with political ties to the administration, Larry Herman of the accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick, was already in residence in Vice President Gore's office, doing early work on the examination of government management that would come to be known as the National Performance Review.

Mack McLarty signed off on the Foster-Watkins-Thomasson cover-up plan late Thursday, May 13. At that point, the Review reported, "Foster asked the FBI to wait for the results of the Peat Marwick financial review before proceeding with its investigation." The FBI was uncomfortable with this procedure, but acquiesced. "After initially expressing a preference for agents to accompany the Peat Marwick team, FBI agent Wade agreed with Foster and Kennedy to wait for the completion of Peat Marwick's review," the Review said.

There were several additional contacts between Kennedy and the FBI once the decision to audit was made. Throughout the day on May 14 and during the weekend, Kennedy urgently attempted to feed any preliminary findings he could get his hands on to the FBI in a vain effort to cover his tracks. These contacts were divulged in the Sessions letter; the White House Review and the GAO audit omitted them entirely. Sessions revealed to Dole that twice on May 14 Kennedy called Wade, "provid[ing] additional information [on the] audit being conducted at the Travel Office and discrepancies being found by the auditors." On May 15, according to Sessions, FBI agents Tom Carl and David Bowie, of the bureau's Washington Metropolitan Field Office, went to the White House "at the behest of Mr. Kennedy . . . to receive a further update about the preliminary findings of the 'performance review.'" Sessions further revealed that the two agents met not only with Kennedy, but also with Patsy Thomasson and Larry Herman of Peat Marwick.[4]

Given Herman's ties to the administration, of course, the audit can hardly be called truly independent; indeed, two aides from Watkins's office—deputy Brian Foucart and Jennifer O'Connor, a staff assistant—worked with Herman, checking back with Thomasson on their progress throughout the weekend. Thomasson then called Watkins; Watkins called Foster; and Foster told Watkins to call Hillary.

Why Hillary? It turns out that the sense of urgency in the White House on May 13—the day Kennedy gave the FBI fifteen minutes to jump—was at least partly due to Hillary's clicking her heels. Though the GAO ignores these conversations, she had asked both Vince Foster and Mack McLarty in separate meetings that day what was being done about the "problems" in the travel office.

How Hillary first became aware of the "problems" has been one of the enduring mysteries of Travelgate, a question glossed over entirely in the White House Review. Recall that on May 12, Thomason and Martens had met with Watkins—and then Watkins told Cornelius to call World Wide with news of imminent firings. Though none of the press accounts picked up on it, the missing piece of the puzzle was disclosed by the GAO. Following the meeting with Watkins, Thomason "repeated his concerns" to Hillary, and then reported back to Watkins on the conversation. (Through his lawyer, Thomason said he could not recall any conversation with Hillary.)

Thomason's interests dovetailed nicely with what White House sources describe as Hillary's obsession with clearing out "Republican holdovers" from the White House staff. Indeed, the GAO reported that on May 14, in a call to update Hillary on the audit, Watkins told the GAO that Hillary "urged that action be taken to get 'our people' into the Travel Office . . ." Though Hillary declined to be interviewed by the GAO, in written responses she maintained that she "does not recall this conversation with the same level of detail as Mr. Watkins."

Foster told Hillary late Thursday that the audit would start the next morning. But even that was not soon enough for Harry Thomason, Cornelius, and Jeff Eller, who met with Mack McLarty on Friday morning to urge him to fire the travel office employees by 5 p.m. that day. McLarty probably didn't know that Cornelius had already told World Wide to come to Washington.

Foster objected to the immediate firings, because the audit had to happen first, and McLarty backed him up. "McLarty decided that no action would be taken until the completion of the Peat Marwick review," according to the

[4] Thomasson has learned how to respond to questions with answers that are technically correct but misleading nonetheless. In a Senate subcommittee hearing March 25 of this year, GOP Sen. Christopher Bond of Missouri had this exchange with Thomasson. Bond: "Did you participate with the Peat Marwick auditors in the review of the Travel Office affair?" Thomasson: "The process of reviewing the White House Travel Office was done by a group of staff from the White House as well as assisted by Peat Marwick for the financial side and for doing numbers. I was briefed by Peat Marwick during the process, sir." Bond: "You didn't participate in the process?" Thomasson: "No, sir." How is it that a meeting on Saturday at the White House with Kennedy, Larry Herman, and two FBI agents doesn't count as "participating in the process"?

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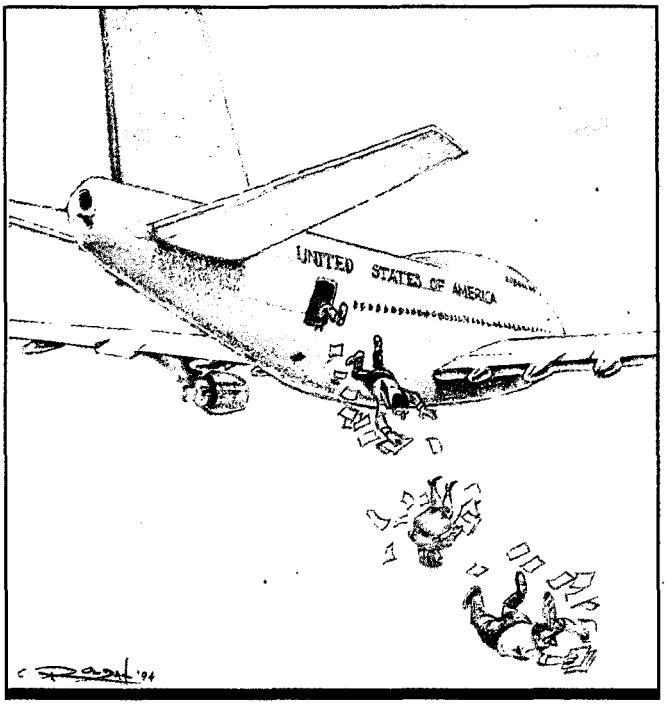
Review. The "action," of course, was pre-determined by Hillary on May 12 after she spoke with Thomason.[5]

On Monday, May 17, Watkins sent a memo to McLarty reporting the results of a draft of the Peat Marwick review and informing him of the pending firings, though one had nothing substantively to do with the other. (As will be discussed later, the audit turned up no evidence of kickbacks.) If the review really mattered at all, why not wait for the final report, which was due that Wednesday, rather than act on a draft?

In the opening paragraph of the memo, Watkins linked the audit to Gore's National Performance Review ("We placed the Travel Office at the front end of the review"). Perhaps this was written with the expectation that the memo would be made public, because McLarty surely knew that the only connection between the audit and the NPR was Larry Herman. Watkins was also contradicted on this point by Gore's office, which told the GAO that the audit was not conducted under the auspices of the NPR.

A second falsehood is that the FBI "suggested they believed there was sufficient cause for them to conduct a criminal investigation but they asked us to have Peat Marwick complete with audit before the FBI would begin further work." Even the White House Review had to come clean on this score, noting that Foster had persuaded FBI agent Wade to delay investigating until the audit could be churned out.



In a third false statement, Watkins conveyed the impression that the new system for the travel office had been devised during the weekend of the audit, rather than months before at his instruction. "Late Saturday, we briefed the FBI on these findings and began planning a new system to replace the old one," he wrote. (Watkins confirmed Sessions's statement that the FBI had White House contact that day.)

Watkins carbon-copied only Hillary on this memo, placing the "cc" designation prominently across the top of the first page, yet another sign that Hillary was privy to the firings before they occurred, as well as to the plan to appoint Cornelius to head the re-organized office working hand in glove with World Wide Travel. Watkins needed Hillary's imprimatur to implement the plan. Carboning the first lady in this bold way suggests the two had a quite close relationship, and Watkins was willing to call in some chips for Carney.

Watkins was born in Hope, the same town as Bill Clinton and Mack McLarty, and like McLarty is said to be a boyhood friend of the president's. (Harry Thomason is from Hampton, about 60 miles from Hope.) A millionaire, Watkins has owned an advertising agency, a music company, a cellular telephone company and two telecommunications businesses. Some of his money was made in a 1983 bid he put together to compete for a cellular phone franchise in Little Rock. Watkins invited Hillary to join a group of prominent Arkansans to apply for a license through the Federal Communications Commission. In an interview in July 1992 with the *Washington Post*, Watkins said of the group, "We were picking friends." In a recent interview with *Business Week* (which briefly mentioned the deal but did not make the Watkins-Travelgate connection), Larry Wallace, another investor in the Watkins group who owns the NBC affiliate in Little Rock, said Hillary's connection to the governor was thought to be a way of attracting the FCC. Hillary put up $2,014 for a 2.5 percent interest in the group.

The FCC, however, decided to award the franchise by lottery and the Watkins group lost out. Watkins then took out a loan to buy out the winner, with Hillary personally guaranteeing $60,000. In the end, the Watkins group bought the license and turned around and sold the franchise in 1988 to the telecommunications giant McCaw Cellular Communications Inc. The group made more than $2 million on the sale; Hillary got a check for $45,998 on her $2,014 investment. That debt seems to have been partially repaid in 1991, when then-Gov. Clinton appointed Watkins's father Henry Grady Watkins III to the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission, a local version of the EPA with broad powers touching on virtually every aspect of the state's economy, from land use to air and water quality.

In 1992, the Clintons became indebted once again to David Watkins, who helped arrange the campaign's $3.5 million bridge loan from his former employer, Worthen National Bank. The loan, based on funds the campaign was expected to bring in, was critical to Clinton's candidacy.

Watkins was involved in a second partnership with Hillary, one that has raised conflict-of-interest questions for the first lady.

(continued on page 71)

[5] What Peat Marwick issued, in fact, was not an audit at all; it was drafted as a letter to Bill Kennedy. The cover memo on the draft clearly noted: "[O]ur procedures do not constitute an audit, examination, or review in accordance with standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants." Apparently the records were too disorganized to do a formal audit; Peat Marwick did not consider whether this was in part the consequence of Cornelius's rifling through documents and removing some of them.

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The Elves of Whitewater

by John Corry

In the end, it may be a novelist or playwright who will tell the Whitewater story best. The press, by and large, is ambivalent. It is aware of the moral vacuum at the White House, but it is uncomfortable with the knowledge, and often wishes it would go away. The problem is, this is not likely to happen. "The corruptions of Whitewater are like the fruit of a richly bearing tree," the novelist Mark Helprin wrote on the op-ed page of the *Wall Street Journal*, "and it seems that every day a new dead hand rises from a misty Arkansas lake." Just so, and the same day Helprin's essay was published, Bill Clinton told a somnolent Washington press corps that he had lost some $22,000 less than he previously had said he had lost on his now famous real-estate venture. The *New York Times* nodded agreeably, and reported this in the twenty-eighth paragraph of its story.

The *Times* was not attempting to cover up malfeasance. Indeed, the week before it had been the first to report that Hillary Rodham Clinton had made $100,000 in commodities trading. So many dead hands have risen, however, that the press has grown confused. What was lost in the twenty-eighth paragraph of the *Times* story that day was treated more appropriately with a page-one headline in the *Washington Post*.

The gingerly approach is widespread. When Mrs. Clinton held a press conference, news stories stressed not so much what she said about Whitewater, but the poise she showed when she said it. *Time* magazine summed this up nicely: "The confiding tone and relaxed body language, which was seen live on four networks, immediately drew approving reviews." The press conference, artfully staged and carefully timed—on a Friday afternoon while Richard Nixon was dying, and the Serbs were doing their best to invite bombing—became not the vehicle for making news, but rather the news itself. It is appropriate for the press to show deference to a first lady, but not when this means critical faculties must lapse. What ought to have been the lead paragraph, or somewhere close to it, in the *Times*'s coverage of Mrs. Clinton poked through only timidly in the twenty-fifth paragraph of a sidebar on page ten:

> Despite a demeanor that suggested infinite patience and openness, she never fully resolved the central question of Whitewater and the commodities trade: whether powerful friends had given the Clintons favorable treatment and had opened doors not accessible to ordinary Arkansans.

Clearly, Whitewater is taxing. The American Society of Newspaper Editors, temporarily suspending its usual brooding about diversity in the newsroom, fretted at its meeting in Washington over whether the press was becoming too mean. The *Times* reported that the editors were worried "about criticism that they may be overemphasizing Mr. Clinton's role in the Whitewater affair." In his keynote address, the ASNE president, William A. Hilliard, the editor of the *Oregonian* in Portland, obviously had Whitewater in mind. He warned the more than 800 editors about what he called "a cancer of mean-spiritedness festering in the journalistic gut," and as an example of mean-spiritedness cited a column by James J. Kilpatrick.

Kilpatrick had written that Clinton, bound by his "vows before the gods of diversity," could not have named a white male to the Supreme Court at the time he chose Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Editor Hilliard, according to the *Times*, said this showed "cold contempt" for Clinton's sincere commitment to end discrimination. Moreover, it set a bad example for young journalists.

Presumably, Hilliard was serious, even though (a) Kilpatrick, as a columnist, could say anything he pleased; (b) he was almost certainly right in what he did say; and (c) whether Clinton is sincerely committed to anything at all is really an unanswered question. Nevertheless, none of the other editors hooted Hilliard off the podium, or broke out in loud guffaws. Whitewater has also offered the press an excuse for the secret pleasures of self-flagellation. By berating itself for imagined misdeeds the press confirms its own sense of importance; and as the story grows, so does the flagellation. A Nexis search for February finds no more than four stories in major publications in which the phrase "feeding frenzy" appears with the word "Whitewater." In a single week in March, however, feeding frenzy and Whitewater turn up in forty-two separate articles.

The truth is that the press was drawn into Whitewater only reluctantly. The *New York Times* now reminds readers that it published the first story about Whitewater—in March 1992—although it neglects to mention that for two years afterward it did its best to ignore it. (Jeff Gerth, who wrote that first story, was bad-mouthed by James Carville and Clinton's other dark elves as an irresponsible reporter. Gerth eventually got his revenge; he disclosed Hillary Clinton's 10,000-percent profit in commodities trading.)

Indeed, for a long while, no newspaper

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other than the *Washington Times* paid much attention to Whitewater. (The *Wall Street Journal* was interested, but only on its editorial page.) The *Washington Times* seized Whitewater during the 1992 campaign and made it its own, and has not surrendered it since, mostly because of a reporter named Jerry Seper. First, Seper discovered that Mrs. Clinton had received a $2,000 monthly retainer from Madison Savings and Loan; then he found that, rather than being a passive investor in Whitewater, she had sought power of attorney. Seper also wrote the first story about the shredding of documents from the Rose Law Firm. More important, he found that documents had been removed from Vince Foster's office. After he wrote about that, the White House was forced to accept the appointment of a special counsel. Seper ought to have won a Pulitzer Prize this year for investigative reporting, but never had much of a chance. Pulitzer juries are non-biased and non-partisan, of course, but the *Washington Times* is a conservative paper.

The White House knows how that game is played. Clinton himself is a participant. At a meeting with the editors of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* in April, he ruminated about Whitewater and the press:

> I think the national press—at least the capital press corps—is under enormous commercial pressures in some ways that they weren't under several years ago. Also, there's something that those of us who are Democrats have to contend with. The radical right have their own set of press organs. They make their own news, and then try to force it into the mainstream media. We don't have anything like that. We don't have a *Washington Times*, or an *American Spectator*, or a Christian Broadcasting Network or a Rush Limbaugh, any of that stuff. This is a different time.

Two things are interesting here. The first is the obvious: that Clinton has characterized the *Washington Times*, *American Spectator* et al., not as conservative, cranky, idiosyncratic, or even merely the right, but as the wicked and probably fascist "radical right." This is demagogic. It is also unsuitable coming from a man who, while defending his wife at a recent news conference, said that if "everybody in the country had a character half as strong as hers, we wouldn't have half the problems we've got today." He sounded like Juan Peron, who really *was* the radical right, praising Eva.

There is something else interesting, too. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and other news organizations may have been late coming to the table, but now they are looking at Whitewater. (Television is not a player on Whitewater; the story is too complex for the evening news.) Clinton, however, cannot acknowledge this, and if he has a problem with big media, he says, it is only because of the "enormous commercial pressures" they face. There is no profit for him in attacking what is called the mainstream press. This is best left to the elves, and, as it happens, two days before Clinton spoke in Minneapolis, James Carville did just that at a breakfast meeting of bureau chiefs and columnists in Washington. The *Washington Post* reported that Carville said the "media frenzy" over Whitewater had gotten "completely out of hand," and that the press should back off before it was "discredited."

This was standard elf talk, often heard on "Crossfire," "Nightline," and the Sunday morning news shows, and unlikely to be taken seriously by anyone other than the members of the ASNE. Carville, however, also brought to the breakfast meeting a chart labeled "Media Food Chain." It looked like a corporate flow chart, with boxes connected by lines and arrows.

The lowest level of the food chain was made up mostly of bimbos and Arkansas state troopers; they fed into Republican politicians and other soreheads, who fed into various tabloids and Rush Limbaugh and G. Gordon Liddy, who fed into the five news entities that fed into, and presumably manipulated, what Carville had labeled the "Mainstream American Press." Reading from left to right on the chart, the five news entities were the *Washington Times*, *New York Post*, *American Spectator*, *New Republic*, and *Wall Street Journal* editorial page.

Hooray for *The American Spectator*, of course; the elf had given it the place of honor, in the box in the middle, with two other boxes on either side. Possibly he had David Brock's celebrated article in mind; it forced the press to confront the moral and ethical standards that now guide the White House. The articles by Daniel Wattenberg and James Ring Adams last month did that, too. Then again, Carville may have been thinking of the delicious disclosure by Lisa Schiffren that Mrs. Clinton itemized $1 income-tax deductions when she gave away pairs of Bill and Chelsea's worn underwear. Surely that had to make the press think: How could Mrs. Clinton keep track of so many old T-shirts and drawers, and forget the second commodities account at Stephens?

It must also be noted that, other than the *New Republic*, the publications Carville cited were more or less conservative, or what the president might call radical right. The *New York Post* disgraced itself with irresponsible reporting on the death of Vincent Foster, but it is hard to find anything even remotely similar to that in the pages of the *Washington Times*, *American Spectator*, or *Wall Street Journal*. Carville was playing a political-cultural card: liberal good, conservative bad, journalism irrelevant.

Meanwhile, the steadily widening disclosures about Mrs. Clinton's commodities trades—she did all the trading herself; no, she consulted with James Blair; well, actually, Blair, counsel for the largest agribusiness in Arkansas, placed thirty of her thirty-two trading orders—have brought forth Clinton's elves in the media. Anthony Lewis has said the commodities trading shows only that the Clintons "wanted to make some money, too." Nina Totenberg has called this a non-story. Ellen Goodman has written that "if the Clintons made money on beef 15 years ago, it wasn't a character flaw—making a profit doesn't make a hypocrite."

And so on, and so on, even on to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s stern warning to the *New York Times*, quixotically delivered on the op-ed page of the *Wall Street Journal*. "Why do *Times* editors think that putting more resources into an investigation of ancient history in Arkansas is so vital for the future of the republic as to justify bringing down an administration that the *Times* generally supports . . . ?" Schlesinger wanted to know. In fact, he may have been getting to the heart of the issue, even if he did not mean to. It is just possible that an investigation into ancient history in Arkansas really could, and should, bring down the administration. On the other hand, if the elves have their way, Whitewater will be left to the poets. ❐

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Ferraro and Whitewater

by James Ring Adams

Hillary Clinton pulled off a Ferraro. Following advice from White House aides and Bigfoot Washington reporters, she finally held a full-length, no-limits press conference on her personal finances, much the way Geraldine Ferraro did in 1984 to answer questions about her family's supposed ties to the mob.

Hillary's performance was skilled and polished, even in striking the warm-and-fuzzy notes. Wearing a soft sweater that matched a vase of spring flowers, relaxing in an open wooden armchair with no intervening podium, she played the nurturing mother as well as the successful career woman. Her answers left open some big holes, such as whether her commodities brokers had steered winning trades to her account and stuck other investors with the losers, but they were full enough to give the press corps an excuse to go away. And some of these journalists had already been signalling their willingness to get off her case. On March 17, for instance, Al Hunt, the *Wall Street Journal*'s resident Washington insider, had urged a Ferraro-style performance on Hillary, arguing: "The Mondale-Ferraro ticket won only one state that year, but the press conference ended that issue."

The rejoicing in Washington may be premature. Geraldine Ferraro's case does offer parallels to Hillary's situation (some eerily close ones, in fact) but they aren't the kind to give the White House much consolation. The Ferraro affair didn't quite unfold during the campaign of 1984 in the way Al Hunt remembered it.

Ferraro's August 1984 press conference was indeed a personal triumph. After releasing a mass of financial documents, she faced 200 reporters for two grueling hours in a hotel ballroom near Kennedy Airport. The turning point came when someone asked why she hadn't included the supplemental schedules on her tax forms. As she made an evasive reply, Gregory Fossedal of the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page started shouting, "Answer the question." Most of the other reporters heeled on Fossedal with an almost unprecedented fury at his breach of decorum. From that moment, if not before, the press pack was eating out of Ferraro's hand.

Still, although the Washington-based press, including Hunt's bureau, backed off the story, other reporters plugged on. The lineup strongly resembled the journalistic split on Whitewater. The "unrespectable" press, including the New York tabloids and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, took the lead. Credit for breaking the story of the mob ties belonged, in fact, to the "Moonie" paper in New York, then the *New York Tribune*, whose talented young investigator Peter Klebnikov first noticed that a lower Manhattan building managed by Ferraro's husband had a notorious pornographer as a tenant. (The pornographer, distributor of such classics as *Debbie Does Dallas*, was murdered several years later in a mob rub-out.) A number of seasoned investigators stayed on the case as well, including Ralph Blumenthal of the *New York Times*, Jonathan Kwitny and Anthony DeStefano of the *Journal*, and a team of thirty from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

It turned out that Ferraro had a good reason for not releasing the supplemental schedules. They might have shown, as it later emerged, that her husband John Zaccaro had entered a real-estate partnership with two convicted felons. Zaccaro and one of his partners were later indicted on state fraud charges, and Zaccaro pled guilty to two misdemeanor counts. The indictments were based in part on a financial statement released at Ferraro's press conference.

But the story continued to develop after the election. Revelations about Ferraro's political milieu emerged on a timetable remarkably like that of the Whitewater coverage. Ironically, the catalyst was the suicide of a political associate. In March 1986, Queens borough president Donald Manes, just recovered from an earlier suicide attempt, took a kitchen knife in his home and plunged it fatally into his heart. His death brought to light lurid tales of his sex orgies, Quaalude abuse, and involvement with a bizarre psychotherapy cult. It also intensified a federal investigation into corruption in the Queens Democratic machine, which turned out to be heavily infiltrated by the Gambino mafia family, which had just been taken over by John Gotti.

The suicide was apparently triggered by impending federal indictments on corruption in the city's Parking Violations Bureau. Then-U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani later personally prosecuted the other defendants, including Bronx borough president Stanley Friedman, who drew a twelve-year prison sentence. After Manes's death, other Queens corruption cases came to light. In October 1986, the Queens district attorney issued several indictments in connection with the borough's cable television contract. The top state judge in Queens, Francis X. Smith, was charged with five counts of perjury and three of criminal contempt of a state grand jury. (Ferraro had once called Smith her political mentor.) The indictment charged that Smith had lied about a meeting with borough president Manes and Ferraro's own husband, John Zaccaro. Another indictment charged Zaccaro himself with acting as Manes's bagman, in demanding a $1 million bribe for the cable franchise. Zaccaro was acquitted after a two-week

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trial when the main prosecution witness testified that he thought Zaccaro was only providing information, not demanding a bribe, when he said how much it would cost to get the franchise. Judge Smith and another alleged bagman were convicted, and Smith received a one-year prison term.

But the Queens corruption scandal was only part of the iceberg hidden under the Ferraro/Zaccaro story—which turned out to include one of the more lurid episodes of the savings-and-loan debacle. The real-estate partnership that Ferraro tried not to report during the campaign involved an entity called the Tieg Corporation. In a January 1984 deposition, Zaccaro had identified himself as secretary-treasurer of the corporation, along with Harold Farrell and Robert Wolk, who turned out to be two petty but active rogues. Farrell, the brother of a former Tammany Hall leader, was a disbarred lawyer who had already served jail time for extortion. Wolk, a Midwesterner with a flat, Kiwanis manner, was still on probation after a grand larceny conviction.

In August 1984, just two weeks before Ferraro won over reporters at her "full disclosure" press conference, a Federal Home Loan Bank Board examination singled out the Tieg Corporation as one of the bigger problems at the Flushing Federal Savings and Loan Association in Queens. Tieg had somehow managed to obtain a million-dollar line of credit, and ultimately borrowed $1.8 million. After the failure of Flushing Federal in November 1985, Farrell and Wolk were indicted for bank fraud.

Flushing Federal has since become famous as a mob bank, a paradigm of organized crime infiltration of the savings-and-loan industry. One of its largest borrowers was a figure named Michael Rapp, which turned out to be the witness protection program pseudonym for a convicted con-man named Michael Hellerman. In his earlier career, Hellerman had testified against his Cosa Nostra associates and written a book entitled *Wall Street Swindler*. Other trails from Flushing led to penny-stock fraud and the celebrity world of Jilly Rizzo, another indicted borrower, who had once been Frank Sinatra's bodyguard.

Very much like Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, Flushing thrived on its dubious practices, despite the regulators. In fact, the examiner who first spotted the problem loans was reprimanded for being too aggressive and hostile to management. A whistleblower by nature, she was hassled into leaving the examination corps and wound up working as a nanny.

Defenders of Ferraro might have argued that this demi-monde was too far removed from her candidacy to be a legitimate issue, just as Clinton partisans say that Whitewater was a remote and irrelevant land deal. Yet these associations raise a number of concerns, even at two removes from the seat of power. What sort of protection, for instance, did political connections give to the corrupt S&Ls? The origin of the savings-and-loan debacle, after all, was primarily political, and estimates of its total cost start at a quarter of a trillion dollars. Flushing accounted for only $80 million, and Madison Guaranty for $50 million of this loss, but every little bit adds up.

And there is no reason to think that the wide-ranging corruption of both Queens and Arkansas politics would stop with the S&Ls. As Washington learned with Bill and Hillary's Arkansas friends, the milieu these appointees come from greatly affects the way they perform at the federal level. The Clintons and Ferraro may have been latecomers to their political environments, and maybe weren't deeply immersed in its more lurid aspects. No one has ever accused Ferraro or her husband of *outstanding* voracity in New York's jungle, compared to, say, the borough presidents. In that Jurassic Park, Zaccaro was definitely a grass-eater.

But such political surroundings shape the habits, the outlook, and the circle of friends that Ferraro would have brought—and the Clintons did bring—to high office. National political reporters failed quite dramatically in both the '84 and '92 campaigns at telling the public just what these milieus were like, possibly because of their sympathy with these candidates. The memory lapse about Ferraro shows they still aren't doing their job.

Imagine if Ferraro had been in office when the Queens scandals erupted. Some of the press would have leaped on the story. Others would have anguished about being too tough on a woman feeling her way in an unprecedented political role. And the public would wonder why the watchdog press had missed the story in the first place.

It would have looked a lot like Whitewater. ❐

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AIDS for Aides

by Byron York

Last September 30, Bill Clinton ordered every worker in the federal government to undergo AIDS awareness training. Despite its scope, the Federal Workplace AIDS Education Initiative attracted only a brief notice in the *Washington Post*. Yet the initiative has set off a massive and chaotic effort to set up classes for well over two million workers. Across the country, AIDS education groups are now lining up for millions of dollars in federal contracts. Says one longtime AIDS trainer: "A lot of people became [AIDS] experts on September 30th."

Clinton described his action as "leadership by example." He made senior staffers go first, ordering White House officials and the heads of all departments to attend training sessions by World AIDS Day, last December 1. Senior White House staff attended seminars run by AIDS czar Kristine Gebbie's office. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and Labor Secretary Robert Reich had to sit down with trainers from Washington's Whitman-Walker Clinic. (Secretary of State Warren Christopher and deputy Strobe Talbott still haven't complied.)

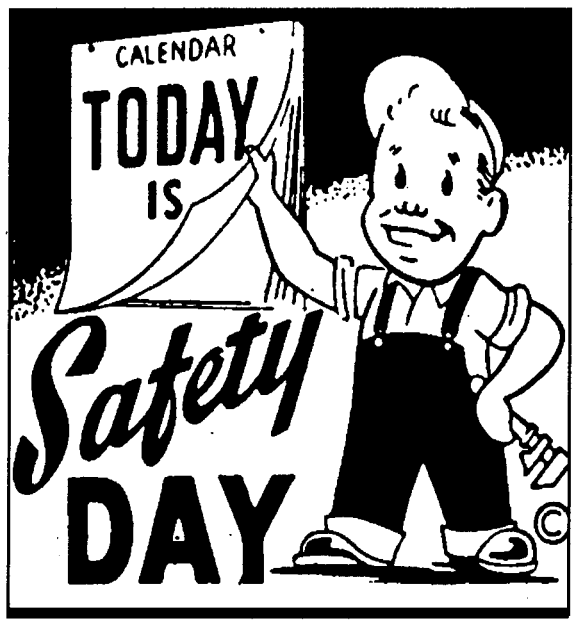
Now classes are underway for thousands of ordinary workers. Most of the training involves basic information about AIDS: how it is transmitted, how it is prevented, how it progresses. Managers will receive instruction on how to deal with HIV-positive workers. Anticipating some resistance, the AIDS office hopes to link attendance to the year-end employee evaluations that are the basis for raises and promotions. "We're taking names and recording," says Don Donaldson, who is coordinating the effort. "Those people who don't attend the training will certainly have some problems."

Most experts believe effective AIDS awareness training has to involve face-to-face contact. But hundreds of thousands of workers spread across the country—many in isolated areas—pose huge logistical difficulties. The Department of Health and Human Services has 140,000 employees, most of them outside Washington. The Department of Agriculture has 110,000. The Justice Department has 96,000. The Customs Service and INS have workers at every entry point into the United States. And of course there is the Postal Service. And the diplomatic corps.

One proposal for reaching the far-flung bureaucrats involves satellite teleconferences. An agency would hire a company to deliver satellite downlink equipment to some small town in, say, Wyoming or Alaska. The company would then set up video screens and an audio link-up to the Washington trainers. Arrowhead, a Virginia telecommunications firm, is preparing bids on such an arrangement for the EPA. Mary-Ann Elliott, owner of the company, declined to answer questions on how much it might cost.

Officials at the AIDS office say they hope the whole project can be done for $5 to $10 per worker, or between $12 and $25 million for the entire civilian workforce. But no single person controls spending; Clinton's order gave each agency the freedom to make its own training arrangements, with no mention of cost. In turn, some large agencies are giving their smaller departments leeway to handle their own training. The bill will vary wildly from agency to agency. For example, the Federal Trade Commission recently signed a contract with Whitman-Walker. The cost: $3,500 to train the FTC's 730 employees in Washington, less than $5 per worker (The FTC is still lining up contracts to train workers at its ten regional offices, so its total cost of training will be substantially higher.) On the other hand, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has signed a contract with Westover Consultants, a Washington-based firm that before the president's order had done AIDS training for "high-risk young people." FERC will pay Westover $24,000 to train its 1,000 employees in the Washington area, a cost of $24 per worker—nearly five times the FCC cost.

The AIDS office says no new money will be designated for the project. But this only means that at least $12-$25 million that could have been spent on real AIDS projects will be spent on consultants. (Steven Michael, spokesperson for the AIDS activist group ACT-UP Washington, calls the initiative "job creation for



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bureaucrats.") Even the National Institutes of Health, which includes many of the world's top AIDS scientists and conducts much of the government's AIDS research, has agreed to pay Whitman-Walker $99,090 to train its employees in the Washington area. That the health workers presumably already know the facts about AIDS does not matter; the president's order includes everyone.

Complaints about how the project is run don't address the fundamental issue of whether it is necessary in the first place. No official I spoke to would hazard an estimate of how many federal workers are HIV-positive. None had any idea about the number of those infected in his specific agency. Most assume the infection rate is similar to that of the nation as a whole, about one-third of one percent.

But last year a much-publicized study from the National Research Council graphically pointed out that AIDS in the U.S. is a tightly localized plague; so much so that the majority of victims are concentrated in a rather small number of urban neighborhoods. "Most people know where the epidemic is at the present time, in two segments of the population," says John Gagnon, one of the study's authors, pointing to evidence showing AIDS staying mostly within the ranks of gay males (where it is receding) and IV drug users and their sex partners.

Gagnon's work supports those who advocate focusing government AIDS programs on those most at risk—and not at large populations like the federal work force. While the government certainly employs members of risk groups, as a whole its workers do not tend toward any particularly dangerous categories. They are older (three-quarters of them are 35 or over), more stable, and more educated than the rest of the work force. They are precisely the people who have most likely already learned the basics about AIDS.

But few agencies I contacted have made any effort to find out what their workers know about AIDS. The most recent federal figures available show that 95 percent of Americans know that HIV can be transmitted through sexual intercourse. Ninety-seven percent know it is spread by sharing needles. Ninety-four percent know a pregnant woman can pass it on to her baby. And 86 percent believe it is unlikely they would ever contract the virus by working near someone who is HIV-positive.

What then is the rationale for the Federal Workplace AIDS Education Initiative? On Gebbie's part, it appears to be a deep faith—despite research to the contrary—in the ignorance of most Americans. A reporter for *Government Executive* magazine recently accompanied Gebbie to an AIDS awareness session at the Pentagon. "I bet if I asked you to say *sex*, *condom*, *semen* and *vagina* three times, you would get a red face," she told a group of fifty political appointees. She was probably right. But the underlying assumption—that a degree of modesty equals ignorance about AIDS—is not necessarily correct.

Another motive seems to be the desire to impose a warm, brotherly feeling on what some officials call the "federal family." A staple of World AIDS Day speeches at various departments last December was the theme of the love and mutual dependence that can exist within the bureaucracy. At Justice Department ceremonies, FBI Director Louis Freeh announced classes to teach employees how "to develop the care and understanding, help and love" needed by fellow workers who have AIDS. Attorney General Janet Reno was less compromising. "We are determined," she said, "to strip away ignorance and prejudice—by education if we can, by litigation if we must."

Across the Mall at the Department of Energy, Don Donaldson was speaking admiringly of Secretary Hazel O'Leary, who had volunteered to take a leading role in the AIDS awareness campaign. O'Leary, Donaldson explained, would not force people into training. "She would say that she wanted people to accept it and understand why they should accept it," he said. "No one should *have* to take training. They should *want* to take training." He received a standing ovation, and the program ended with a sing-along led by the DOE chorus:

Instead of building walls of hate
We really ought to concentrate
On treating our fellow man like he
was our brother.
Whoa, whoa, whoa, we ought to love,
Yes, we ought to love each other. ❐

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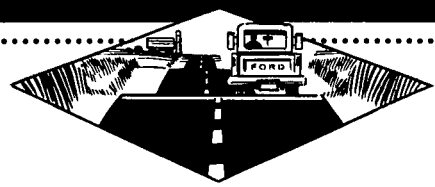

The Clinton-Gore Incinerator

by Evan Fitzmaurice

In a July 19, 1992 campaign speech in Weirton, West Virginia, Al Gore blasted Waste Technologies Industries (WTI), a hazardous waste incinerator project in nearby East Liverpool, Ohio. "The very idea of putting WTI in a flood plain, it's just unbelievable to me. I'll tell you this, a Clinton-Gore administration is going to give you an environmental presidency to deal with these problems. We'll be on your side for a change," Gore said. The incinerator's location—in a minority neighborhood, 100 yards from houses and 400 yards from an elementary school—made it a particularly photogenic instance of the "environmental terrorism" Gore had derided in his book *Earth in the Balance*.

In December 1992, Vice President-elect Gore asked, "for the safety and health of local residents," that a General Accounting Office investigation of WTI be conducted before a crucial test burn permit was issued. Yet in March of last year, after months of reviews and audits, the Clinton EPA opted *not* to oppose plans to begin commercial operations at the site. Some would call it a triumph of levelheadedness over environmental alarmism—noting that none of the allegations against the WTI site have been confirmed except for an initial, failed test-burn. Others, citing the Clintons' personal ties to the waste project, are calling it a triumph for the powerful Stephens family of Little Rock.

Stephens Inc.—which raised over $100,000 for the Clinton campaign and whose Worthen Bank subsidiary extended it a crucial $3.5-million line of credit—built and financed the $160-million incinerator, which will be the largest of its kind in North America, through a 1981 joint venture with the Swedish incinerator maker Von Roll and two other companies. Twenty acres of land from the Columbiana County Port Authority were to be used in connection with "river-related industry." The original Army Corps of Engineers permit provided for the construction of a transfer facility and warehousing area, but explicitly forbade the handling of hazardous waste.

A June 6, 1982 communiqué from the Chicago EPA office to Washington headquarters mentioned discussions of the waste prohibition. But somehow Stephens managed to skirt the Army requirements and obtain an EPA operating permit. Little Rock reporting casualty L.J. Davis wrote in *Mother Jones* last November that some Ohioans, including Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, said that Chicago EPA administrator Valdus Adamkus worked with WTI from the beginning to cover up permit violations and to quash EPA studies that found toxic risk to the food chain near the WTI incinerator. Davis also reported that in 1983, an examiner from the state hazardous-waste board recommended rejecting the project's Ohio permit application. Clearly the state and federal permits for WTI were on shaky ground.

Meanwhile, between 1981 and 1990, owners and partners on the project changed several times. At least one of those transfers involved a repunctuation of WTI's name—a technique, opponents claim, that is commonly used by money-launderers and other white-collar criminals to disguise ownership.

Stephens sold its interest in WTI to Von Roll America in 1990. The Union Bank of Switzerland and Morgan Guarantee Trust Company of New York handled the financing of the Stephens share, to the tune of $128 million. But under the joint venture agreement between Stephens and the original WTI partners, Stephens remains liable for the investment by UBS and Morgan Guarantee. A 1992 investigation by Ohio Attorney General Lee Fisher found that, in making the deal with Von Roll, "WTI clearly considered the possibility that the changes in its ownership structure . . . could not be accomplished without a modification to the permit."

According to Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University who specializes in environmental litigation, Stephens could face criminal and civil charges if representations made to the WTI enterprise were misleading or fraudulent. The changes in punctuation and ownership could constitute such representations, especially if they jeopardize the EPA permits. Under civil RICO statutes, if false claims about permits or ownership led Morgan and UBS to invest in WTI, they can sue Stephens for three times the amount of the investment. This means that if East Liverpool activists expose missteps in the regulatory history of WTI and succeed in forcing the government to revoke its permit, the Clintons' largest source of campaign funding could be left with a $400 million loss.

It was at this point that the Clintons put Robert Sussman on the project. Before the incinerator became a cause célèbre for environmental and community activists in Ohio and West Virginia, WTI negotiated waste contracts with Sussman, then legal counsel for the Chemical Manufacturing Association (CMA). A Yale Law School contemporary of the Clintons, Sussman helped WTI to secure contracts with three CMA members: DuPont, Chemical Waste Management, and BASF. These contracts, later abandoned due to fears that WTI would be shuttered, would have guaranteed almost 100 percent of WTI's burning capacity for the rest of its existence.

Evan Fitzmaurice, former legislative staffer and speechwriter for Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, is a research assistant at The American Spectator.

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When the Clintons came to Washington, Sussman became deputy to EPA administrator Carol Browner. When Browner recused herself from dealings with WTI—owing to her husband's legal work for the radical public interest group, Citizens United, which opposes the facility—Sussman became the EPA's point-man on WTI permits and licensing.

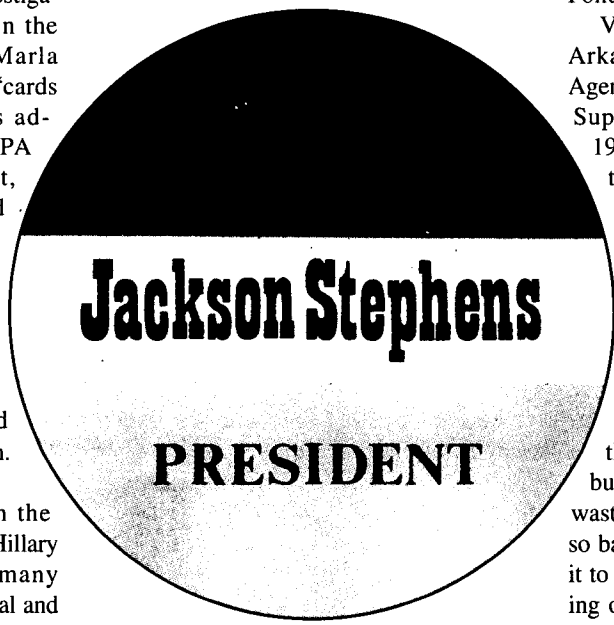
EPA acting general counsel Gerald H. Yamada made a perfunctory investigation into the conflict-of-interest, finding that Sussman had no need to recuse himself from WTI matters because he officially represented CMA, not DuPont and BASF. "The mere fact that some members of CMA have an interest in the outcome of the WTI matter would not cause 'a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts' to question your impartiality."

Be that as it may, the GAO investigation suddenly found itself dead in the water. Gore's spokeswoman, Marla Romash, blamed the inaction on "cards that were dealt by the previous administration." Although the Bush EPA did authorize the WTI permit, Romash ignored that Gore had already overturned other Bush administration authorizations for similar hazardous waste incinerators. Thus, under a supposedly green administration, WTI became the first incinerator in EPA regulatory history to fail a test burn and still be allowed to continue operation.

WTI has links, too, with the Rose Law Firm, where Hillary Clinton worked on many Stephens projects involving municipal and state bond work. Stephens made an effort to secure bond financing for WTI through the Ohio Water Development Authority in 1987. Documents obtained by *TAS*, including a December 14 application for $139 million in state bond financing, listed Stephens as the proposed lead managing underwriter. While Charles A. Waterman of Brickler and Eckler served as counsel for Stephens on a number of WTI projects, the Rose Firm was retained during the 1980s to do bond work for Stephens as well. The Yamada report on Sussman's conflict-of-interest mentioned Hillary's work for the Stephenses, and noted that it was Hillary who recommended the compromised Sussman for his EPA job overseeing WTI.

Beginning in 1990, Hillary Clinton received $31,000 a year to serve on the board of the Lafarge Corporation, a French company that is the second-largest producer of cement in the United States. Lafarge's Systech burning units disposed of more than 400 million gallons of hazardous waste between 1979 and 1992. In September 1992, Lafarge's plant in Demapolis, Alabama, was fined $1.8 million under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act for violating just about every possible regulation that existed for cement kilns—one EPA official described the plant as "totally out of control." A year later, the Clinton administration allowed Lafarge to settle the $1.8 million in fines for only $594,000.

When Lafarge obtained a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge for sand and gravel in a section of the Ohio River directly facing WTI, the circle of conflicts-of-interest was finally closed. Since at least April 1991, while Hillary was a board member of the parent company, Standard Lafarge has been permitted to dredge the Ohio River for sand and gravel to make cement. While the dredging clearly benefits Lafarge's cement-making operation, the consequent deepening of the Ohio River will allow waterway access to the WTI incinerator. Since the original permit allowed for a port structure, and since WTI has run into opposition due to its use of roadways to haul hazardous waste, opening the Ohio River to WTI would solve a number of its problems.



It would not be the first time toxic-waste burners with close ties to the Clintons have received preferential treatment. Ensco is a hazardous-waste facility in El Dorado, Arkansas, that was represented by the Rose Law Firm in the early 1980s. It was among the first firms to burn PCBs. While governor, Clinton kept in his office an antique rocking chair that was a gift from former Ensco president Melvin Bell. Environmental watchdog groups had sought prosecution of Ensco for years, but it was not until Bill Clinton took his rocking chair to Washington that an Arkansas case against Ensco was finally settled. On May 7, 1993, Ensco, while admitting no liability, agreed to pay $475,000 in cash and services for 200 instances of wrongdoing at the El Dorado plant. It was the largest penalty ever levied by the Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology.

Vertac, located in Jacksonville, Arkansas, manufactured the herbicide Agent Orange and was the first target for Superfund prosecution by the EPA in 1979. Shortly after Vertac was forced to destroy 30,000 drums of waste, including 3,000 drums of dioxin, Governor Clinton allowed taxpayer dollars to fund the construction of an incinerator in residential Jacksonville at tremendous financial benefit to Vertac. This April, workers at the Vertac incinerator told the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* that it was falling apart. Vertac has burned drums of highly toxic 2,4,5-D waste for more than two years. "It leaks so bad there's a chute with a barrel under it to collect all of the D-waste that's leaking out of the front of the kiln," said one worker at the facility. The Arkansas attorney general's office announced on April 9, 1994, that it would begin an investigation.

Hugh Kaufman of the EPA's Hazardous Site Control Division, the man who blew the whistle on Love Canal in 1978, sees the Clintons' involvement in WTI as the result of a conflict-of-interest—not a blunder. The Clintons, he notes, have a dozen years of top-level dealings with companies that are responsible for burning over *three-quarters of the hazardous waste in the United States*. "These are not people," Kaufman says, "who would make policy mistakes from a lack of first-hand experience." ❐

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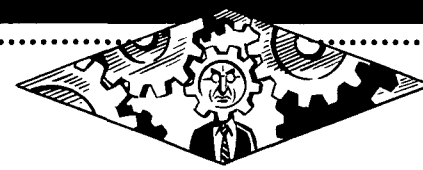

Gun Racket

by Mark Yost

It was an anti-gun obsessive's Christmas wish come true: a gun buyback program filling news pages and TV screens across the country with pictures not of gangland violence but of people turning in guns for Toys-R-Us gift certificates. Better yet, the dateline was New York City's most notoriously crime-wracked drug bazaar, Washington Heights. So impressed was Bill Clinton with the images he saw on television last Christmas that he's now considering a national gun buyback program as part of his crime bill.

But buybacks have been provably unsuccessful in deterring crime, despite the myths that have grown with their popularity. Using a list put out by the *Los Angeles Times* of cities that had gun buyback programs, I called those police departments and found that the number of homicides, in the majority of cases, *rose* following gun buyback programs. (See box.) In those cities where homicides fell, they increased the following year, usually surpassing the number recorded the year of the buyback. In Rockford, Illinois, the murder rate doubled, and in St. Louis a new homicide record was established in the year beginning fourteen months after the buyback. Police officers around the country said they never saw gun buyback programs as having any impact on crime.

Buyback programs do not even take guns out of the hands of criminals. In most cases, fewer than one percent of the guns turned in are stolen. While many *are* unregistered, police say most of those are weapons that have been in families for years and were held long before gun registration was required. With the advent of gun control, previously legal guns became illegal and law-abiding citizens were nervous about turning them in. "It was a way for honest citizens to get rid of a gun," Rockford, Illinois police chief William Fitzpatrick said of his buyback program. While many buybacks are conducted in high-crime neighborhoods, statistics show it's not the criminals turning in the guns. So one effect of the buyback is to disarm the law-abiding citizens of statistically dangerous neighborhoods.

The initiatives gobble up scarce crime-fighting dollars. Although a number of the programs are privately funded, even these often use public funds. The New York City program that presented $100 gift certificates last Christmas was privately funded—but under a longstanding city-funded program, the participants also received $25-75 in cash. The media have been lazy about covering these and other, less flattering aspects of buyback programs. The *New York Times* hyped the surrender of one 9-mm. pistol, correctly implicating such guns in street crime, but it wasn't until paragraph seventeen of the 22-graph story that the reader learned the gun had been sitting in the dresser drawer of a law-abiding citizen for many years.

Some buyback programs fail on their own terms. In New Jersey, a man turned in eighteen guns, some that couldn't even be fired, and collected $1,350 in certificates for food, clothing, and furniture. "Had this guy sold the stuff to a gun dealer, he would have gotten maybe $75 for the lot," a police officer said.

At a Hartford, Connecticut program that gave $100, residents were legally buying handguns at local gun shops for $60 and turning them in for $100. One man came in with thirty-nine Chinese-made rifles and made a profit of about $1,200.

And in Camden, New Jersey, a teenager turned in a sawed-off shotgun at a buyback for $50 and used the money to buy a handgun nearby. He later used it in a homicide. ❐

Mark Yost works at the Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page.*

Gun Buyback Programs: Costs and Murder Rates

Buffalo, Feb. 1993:
$75,000 for 2,000 guns.
Homicides 1993—79; 1994—120 (projected).
Guns that were stolen: 1 percent.

Philadelphia, July 1991:
$21,000 for 1,000 guns.
Homicides: 1991—440; 1992—425; 1993—465.

Rockford, Ill., Sept. 1992:
$20,000 for 370 guns.
Homicides 1992—12; 1993—24.

St. Louis, Oct. 1991:
$341,000 for 7,500 guns.
Homicides: 1991—260; 1992—231; 1993—267; 1994—287 (projected).
Stolen: 1 percent.

San Francisco, Oct.-Dec. 1991:
$89,500 for 1,730 guns.
Homicides: 1991—96; 1992—117; 1993—132.
Stolen: less than 1 percent.

Seattle, Sept. 1992:
$90,000 for 1,800 guns.
Homicides 1992—60; 1993—67.

Syracuse, May 1992:
$115,000 for 2,700 guns.
Homicides: 1992—16; 1993—19.

Washington, D.C., Sept. 1992:
$20,000 for 400 guns.
Homicides: 1992—335; 1993—354.
Stolen: less than 1 percent.

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Climb Every Mountain

by Benjamin J. Stein

Tuesday

Paradise. I'm at *The American Spectator*'s Washington Club dinner (see page 72). It's in a big room at The Four Seasons in Georgetown. I'm the master of ceremonies. The room is filled with people I like: Wlady Pleszczynski, Ron Burr, Baron Von Kannon, John Podhoretz, David Brock, Boone Pickens, Steve Forbes, Bob Bork, Len and Suzanne Garment, Jane O'Donnell, Senator Lugar, Aram Bakshian, my wonderful parents, and, of course, the star of the show, Bob Tyrrell. I love being with these people. They're like family. In all the world, I feel most comfortable with my parents, little Perfect, and my estranged wife, and then with the people from the *Spectator*.

Between my gags at the mike, I'm trying to figure out why I like the *Spectator* crowd so much. It's not just that they're all smart, good-looking, and rich (just kidding about the rich part). It's not just that we all feel the same way about the Clintons. It's that we all like to laugh and have the same sense of humor. That's all it takes.

Anyway, I had my fun, and then returned in the pouring rain to my dreary hotel room and felt sad. I didn't want the evening to end. Now I have to go back to Los Angeles and be a stranger again.

Wednesday

On the airplane, I sat next to a man I had met a number of years ago at a Yale Law School function. Now he's a partner at a large management consulting firm, and undoubtedly makes a lavish living in his native San Francisco. He had been a major liberal at Yale, and continued to be. But about a year-and-a-half ago, Something Happened. . . .

"My wife, Liza, was always the most wonderful kind of woman," he said. "Very progressive, very interested in progressive politics. Very helpful in getting a gay- and woman-friendly curriculum in our local school board, and she was actually arrested picketing the school. A really fine citizen," he added.

"Sounds wonderful," I said. I wondered if there might be any way to pretend that my seat was broken and move to another spot in the plane.

"Then, about a year and a half ago, my wife was putting up some shelves. She didn't see any reason why only men should use the hammers in society, and she slipped on a ladder and hit her head. It was really serious, and for a while, she wasn't expected to live. She was in a coma for at least two weeks, and then she started to wake up and to heal, or at least that's what we thought."

Hmmm. I thought. Maybe I could pretend I was having a heart attack . . .

"By the time she got out of the hospital, it was very clear that she was a different woman from the progressive, together woman I knew. For one thing, she had become very race-conscious, only in a terrible way," he said.

"The very first meal I took her to after she got out, the waitress was really slow. So Liza says to her, 'Hey, aren't I the right color to get served here?' "

"I was so embarrassed. I had to apologize and leave a really big tip, and when I got her out to the car, she said to me, 'What a pitiful wimp you are. Why didn't you punch that rude waitress instead of taking it out on me?' "

"How horrible," I said.

"It got worse," my friend said. "My wife isn't gay herself, not that it would matter, but she always had a lot of gay friends. We had lunch with one of them a week after the episode at the restaurant, and my wife said to this woman, 'Hey, how come all of you women in women's groups look like men? How come all your women pals who work for Bill Clinton look like men?'

"I felt like I was going to fall under the floor. It was humiliating. Before I could even think of what to say, Liza threw this in. 'If you want to be men so much, why don't you just go to the hospital and have a sex-change operation?' "

He paused for a moment and then added, "If you tell any of our friends from Yale, I'll kill you."

"You can count on me," I said.

Thursday

Now, this is what I call an emotional day. Off in the early morning to do a voice-over for a movie that could be funny. As I was wandering through the San Fernando

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Valley, desperately trying to find my way to an obscure address in Burbank, I got a page from my commercial agent.

In happy tones, she told me that I'd been selected to do a commercial for the state lottery agency of a major southeastern state. It would be one day's work, and pay extremely well. I was happy. I was ecstatic. ("Extremely well" is a relative term. A real star would have hung up the phone.)

Finally I found the voice-over studio and read my small part. I play an agent whose client is screaming at him. It was about ten minutes' very easy work. Then, over to Universal for an audition. I am to try out to play a grossly overweight news anchor. Since I am only moderately overweight, I selected another part in the script and did well. That's what I thought, but it will be up to the producer and director. They looked at me stolidly as I auditioned. How young they look. How young all of these important people in Hollywood look. Time passes. I used to be like them, and now I feel like an ancient-mariner-cum-peddler, pathetically hawking his wares, which happen to be himself.

Off to lunch at Morton's with a very funny guy named Billy Kimball and his girlfriend, a recent Vassar grad. Amazingly, she was from Macedonia. I asked her if she were related to Alexander the Great. She looked smug and said maybe to Philip. A woman I used to date came by the table. She told us she was getting engaged and that her gown was being made at Vera Wang. She will be a beautiful bride. I thought of my first wedding day and my first wife (who also happens to be my second and permanent wife). She had her gown made at a discount place in Mount Vernon, New York. But you could not in your wildest dreams imagine how beautiful she looked. I still have her photo of that day on my desk.

Anyway, we all talked about Hollywood, and about Ukraine, where Billy is about to go to work, and then we went off into the sunshine. Morton's at lunch is something closely akin to a cloud—light and cheerful and quick and delicious and not at all expensive. It's the best place I've ever been for lunch, except maybe the White House Mess in the days when Bob Haldeman used to keep us in stitches with his witty antics. I miss Bob. He should never have had to go to jail. Never.

Off to another audition at Warner Hollywood. I was to play a washed-up speechwriter(!). In the waiting room were a few washed-up-looking actors. God, I thought, is that me? Is that my future? Maybe it's my present.

I walked out into the parking lot for a few minutes to wait my turn. I felt sorry for myself, and remembered when I had taught at American University twenty-two years ago and been a tremendous hotshot with the kids. A student fell in love with me and told me she would follow me around like a dog or like a turtle for all time, not for money, but just because she loved me. I was very mean to her, and now I'm being paid back by being around women who are as hard as acrylic lacquer. How did I ever wind up so far from home?

I read my part, and then got in my car to drive home. At the gate, there was a new guard to take my pass. "Mr. Stein," he said. "I saw you on C-Span at the *Spectator* dinner. It was great. There are only a few of us conservatives in Hollywood, and we have to stick together." Indeed we do.

Then, a long, blissful sleep and then a visit to Tommy, the wonder boy. He's become so addicted to Sonic the Hedgehog, though, that it's almost as if no one but Sonic is there. It was a frustrating visit, except for reading about Bill and Hillary in the newspaper.

I keep thinking: What if Nancy Reagan were revealed to have been given a $100,000 bribe lightly disguised as commodities profits? What if Pat Nixon were revealed to have been business partners for fourteen years with a man who presided over the looting of a federally insured S&L? What if Nixon had been given, for no money down, half interest in a real estate development by a man who did government business while he was a senator? What if John Dean's body were found in questionable circumstances across the street from the CIA?

The press would be screaming the house down, that's what.

This is what you get when you have one-party government in the media. Half-hearted following of a story of a Snopesian family that lied its way into the White House and is now pulling every lever it can to cover it up.

When I got back to the Shoreham Towers, I had a call from red-headed Dotty, my beautiful but wacky neighbor. She's been out of work for over a year, and now she was eager to know if I had any postage stamps.

"I think so, Dotty," I said. "Come on up and I'll give you a few."

"What kind are they?" she asked.

"I think they're legends of jazz or something like that," I said. "Will that be satisfactory?"

"Well, no," she said. "Because actually, I wanted just those American flag ones."

"Any particular reason?"

"Yes," she said. "I'll be using them to mail out résumés, and I want them to look very cheery and upbeat. I want the communication to be perfect."

"I see," I said and rang off.

Dotty can barely spell and cannot write a grammatical letter. She's been out of work for so long it's a sad joke. But she thinks the kind of stamp she uses will get her a job. God help her. But of course, why would I expect anything else?

I called Dotty back. "I'll get you

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some stamps tomorrow if I'm at the grocery store," I said.

"Never mind," she said cheerily. "I'm going to fax the letters."

How to guarantee you absolutely will not be considered for a job? Fax the application.

But, again, why expect anything else?

I rested briefly at the mighty Shoreham Towers, then got into my fabulous car (fabulous because it never breaks down) and headed off to Channel 13. I sat down at a computer and wrote my guest commentary. Tonight, I'm going to: sing a few lines from one of my favorite Bob Dylan songs, "It's All Right, Ma, I'm Only Bleeding"; make cruel fun of Bill and Hillary; and tell about how the real problem in most of our lives is not the budget deficit, but a sleep deficit, and we all have to get more sleep.

I did my little bit, glowed in the light of publicity for a few minutes, and then headed back to my apartment. This is the way it always is. I do something that's a lot of fun, like TV or the *Spectator* dinner, and then I'm back all by my little self in my bed, with no Trixie, and I'm really, really lonely.

Still, I'm not at the Federal Trade Commission. I'm not at the Office of Economic Opportunity. Tomorrow, things will be better, and I'll still have little Perfect. Satchel Paige used to say that any day he got up was a good day. I like to say that any day I can hug little Angel, even if he's saying, "Let me go, Daddy," that's a damned good day.

Sunday

Here we are back at Schweitzer in Sandpoint, Idaho, skiing. Tommy is doing downhill, and I'm cross-country skiing. Actually, staggering around on skis is more like it. But I love it. I've even learned how to glide a few inches with each ski movement. There is much to be said for learning something new. And if it's Winston Churchill who said that nothing is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result, let me add that it's almost as exhilarating to "ski" without breaking one's neck.

As I skied around, snow began to fall. In fact, it began to come down in torrents. It was something like a blizzard. Cold winds blew. I was in my borrowed ski jacket and wet pants. I felt happy. I cannot believe that I get to have ski lessons while there are still people who have to work at the FTC. Two snowboarders breezed by, looked up at the snow, and one said to the other, "Man, it's really puking up here." For some reason, it made me laugh out loud. Then, as I glided back in the other direction, Tommy came by. "Daddy," he screamed. "You're skiing." He looked happy, and zoomed down a hill.

Back at the rental shop, I visited with Jackie, the dream ski woman, Heather, Extreme Craig, Matt, Regular Craig, and everybody else. I love Schweitzer Mountain. It's the friendliest resort on earth. They turn themselves inside out to accommodate little Perfect. They even made a custom snowboard for him and would not accept payment. You can have Aspen and Vail and all their famous names. I'll take Schweitzer.

Monday

Back to L.A. Little Precious is sitting next to me coloring. Occasionally he asks me a question about what makes the airplane fly. When he does that, I am required by law to hug him and kiss him. He's so delicious I can hardly stand it. Sometimes he says, "Daddy, you be Ren and I'll be Stimpy and we'll act out a show."

The amazing part is that he actually knows all of the lines, including mine. Then he says, "Okay, now we'll shift and I'll be Ren and you be Stimpy because you're so fat."

"Thank you, my boy," I answer.

A stewardess came by and told me how much she liked me in "The Wonder Years." Then she told me how well-behaved Tommy was. I'm so proud of him.

I could barely bring myself to return him to his mother.

Tuesday

Here's something interesting that I've noticed. First I must tell you that it comes under the heading of my lifelong interest in what I call "Successology," or why people get to be successful. I have been on the track of this for years because I want to know why I'm not more successful, and why some real fools are heads of corporations and proprietors of wildly billion-dollar-size successful production companies. Someday soon I'm going to write a book about this. It will be something like Edward F. Denison's pioneering *Sources of Economic Growth*, only I'll call it *Sources of Personal Success*. It will be my masterpiece. Really. No kidding. Honestly.

Anyway, here's the really interesting thing I've noticed: People who are successful actually have some skills, and work to make sure they keep them. Or, to put it another way, people who are successful go to the trouble of investing in themselves.

One big way I've noticed this is by observing the doormen and receptionists here at the Shoreham Towers. By and large, even when they have nothing to do, they don't read or watch educational TV. If they did, it would change their lives. On the other hand, maybe they're not allowed to watch PBS or read. No, that can't be right, because they watch "Entertainment Tonight" constantly and read magazines about exotic cars.

For years, there was a Moroccan man who sold little flowers with lights in them outside the Hard Rock Cafe. He was always reading textbooks about engineering. That was by very dim light. Then one day he told me he had a job as an engineer at Hughes Aircraft. I really admired that guy, and people could learn a lot from him.

I, especially, could learn a lot from him. That's why we've bought a computer and I am learning how to use it, however spastically.

Anyway, I thought of all of that because Dotty, my beautiful but not very smart neighbor, just called me to ask if I had the new *People* magazine.

"I hear it's got a great article about Pink Floyd," she said. "I just bought their newest disc and it's really great."

An iron law: People fixated on rock-music celebrities are not on the success track.

Wednesday

More Whitewater news on the radio as I drove over to a small acting job in Pasadena. I play a medical examiner who helps a detective who's the husband of the first woman president. He is a tough Irish street cop, even though his wife is a patrician. Together we solve a mysterious death, which, of course, turns out to have happened not because the killer was high on crack and the victim dissed him, but because a corporate polluter wants to keep polluting.

Anyway, the news was that newly

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released documents show that James P. McDougal actually was no innocent victim but looted Madison Guaranty himself. *Quelle surprise,* as my tenth-grade French teacher used to say.

Now, let's make a list of all the things that Bill and/or Hillary have done that Nixon never did, and that no other president ever did:

(1) Accepted a half interest in a real estate development for no money while a state attorney-general.

(2) Accepted illegal contributions from a federally insured S&L that contributed to the failure of that S&L.

(3) Cooperated as business partners with the explicit looter of a federally insured S&L for fourteen years.

(4) Interfered with a federal investigation of a homicide.

(5) Used the first lady as the president's bag woman by having her collect bribes paid through the medium of phony commodities trades that any child could tell were rigged—if they happened at all (and this devolution of the position of first lady into bag lady is also unprecedented).

(6) Partnered up with and accepted campaign contributions from a convicted drug dealer (whom Bill then pardoned).

(7) Cheated for years on end on their federal income tax returns in comically obvious ways such as not reporting the provision of a valuable waterfront lot for no money as income.

As I thought about all of this, I got a call to go to Morton's with an almost preternaturally smart lawyer named (interestingly enough) Bill. We sat in the dim light and I laid out the crimes of the Clintons. He's a red-dog Democrat, and looked really sad.

"How does he get out of this?" my friend asked. Suddenly, with all of the din of Morton's around us, I realized something: there's no way Bill and Hillary can get out of this. If they admit they were crooks in Arkansas, which they unequivocally were, they're sunk. If they admit they obstructed justice, they're done for. If they don't admit it, they'll die the death of a thousand cuts.

It's sort of the way I felt about RN in the summer of 1973, even before I started speechwriting: the chess game was up. You could see a few moves ahead, and the end of the game.

And, may I say, for sheer arrogance and contempt, never has a couple deserved such a fate more than the Clintons.

I discussed this with my brilliant friend Bill and then took him to the airport, and as I drove back along the dim streets of Los Angeles, past the slumbering strippers of Baldwin Hills, and then past the recently re-opened stores of the riot area along La Cienega, I thought of poetry. The poem of Hillary and Bill, those *cheaters*—cheaters on spouses, cheaters on their taxes, cheaters of the voters, cheaters on election laws, cheaters on saving and loan laws, those cheaters who told us they were new and better, more moral, and were really just more hypocritical, more mortal.

Hippies. That's the way the hippies I knew in Santa Cruz twenty years ago were to a *t*. Pretending to be saints and angels, and chiseling whenever they could.

How can people be so heartless? How can people be so cruel? ❐

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Home Rule

by Grover G. Norquist

While home schooling in the sixties and seventies was largely a liberal phenomenon—parents who wanted their children out of the conformist, bourgeois public schools—the growth in home schooling since the late seventies has been among religious conservatives, evangelicals, and Roman Catholics. Mike Farris, who ran for lieutenant governor of Virginia last year, has been working with home-schoolers for eleven years. Now the president of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), Farris believes the present trend will continue over the next four years, and that home-schoolers, who today comprise 2 percent of all school age children in the U.S., will eventually reach 5 percent—leveling off there, since home-schooling requires that a family support itself with one wage-earner. Farris estimates that there are between 700,000 and a million children currently being schooled at home by 250,000 to 300,000 families.

Farris's group has 38,000 members who pay $100 in dues each year. His newsletter is published six times a year, and his emergency fax system goes out to 140 groups that in turn connect with 3,000-4,000 city support groups, who contact the individual families. The groups have close links to parents who send their children to private schools as well. Twelve percent of children are in private schools, a number that continues to grow, due to the founding of two to three new evangelical schools every day.

In secular Washington, their affiliation with born-again Christianity has led allies and adversaries alike to underestimate the home-schoolers' political sophistication. But the most powerful union in the country recently tried to pull a fast one on them and got burned.

Grover G. Norquist is the president of Americans for Tax Reform.

On February 14, Dean Clancy, the education staffer for Rep. Dick Armey (R-Tex.), called the National Center for Home Education (NCHE) to ask if an amendment offered by Rep. George Miller (D-Cal.) might be interpreted to require certification for parents who teach their children at home. Within an hour, they got their answer: it most certainly could. No states now require such licensing, although the unrelentingly left-wing National Education Association—with annual dues of more than $165 million—has long fought for it.

Unionized teachers outnumber home-schooling parents by a factor of five. But ten days later, the home-schoolers won an overwhelming victory. Congress voted 374 to 53 to pass an Armey amendment that not only exempts home-schoolers from teacher certification, but goes on to exempt home-schoolers and all private schools from the entire thousand-page H.R. 6 (the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act). It further protects home-schoolers by rewriting the federal definition of a school to exclude them. Home-schoolers waged a grassroots campaign of phone calls, faxes, and personal visits to Congress that defeated the most powerful lobby in the U.S. in a week and a half. *Roll Call* reported that more than 800,000 calls rained in on members—more than they received over gays in the military, the Clinton tax increase, and NAFTA *combined*. While it got scant coverage in the mainstream press, this was a battle that will be studied by conservative activists—in and out of Congress. What follows is a blow-by-blow account of the showdown:

Monday, February 14: Within an hour of discovering the threat to home schooling, Dick Armey offers an amendment in committee to exempt home-schoolers and private schools from the teacher-certification requirement. George Miller leads the entire Democratic side of the committee in voting down the Armey language. Miller's vote makes clear in retrospect that the *intent* of the school bill has from the beginning been to regulate home-schoolers.

Farris hires several local printers to print 38,000 copies of a letter outlining home-schoolers' fears, which are out the door to all HSLDA members within 56 hours. Copies are delivered to Congress and a "national fax alert" begins.

Wednesday, February 16. Farris tapes an interview with Pat Robertson's "700 Club." An hour later, he gives a two-hour interview to Marlin Maddoux, host of "Point of View," a syndicated radio show that reaches four million listeners. By four that afternoon, congressional staffers begin calling HSLDA, promising that their bosses will vote for a "Home School/Private School Freedom Amendment" and asking for an end to the calls from their districts.

Thursday, February 17. The wave of calls into Washington builds. By noon, Miller's office has stopped answering calls and turned on its answering machine. At one, Farris tapes an interview with James Dobson whose radio show will reach 1,500 stations on Monday, February 21. One Democratic congressman's chief of staff tells home-schooling leader Doug Phillips he has already received 600 calls today, and begs Phillips to ask for the calls to stop.

Within forty-eight hours of the fax alert, more than a thousand Christian radio stations have covered the story. Within 72 hours, a majority of evangeli-

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cal churches have been alerted.

Friday, February 18. Armey announces that he will lead the fight for the Home School/Private School Freedom Amendment which has the support of seventy congressmen by nightfall. Two problems arise: anti-home-school congressional offices misinform callers, telling them that their concerns have been taken care of. The waters are further muddied by the efforts of a fringe coalition of small moderate and liberal home-schoolers to negotiate compromise language—independent of Farris and Armey. Another leadership fax goes out to make it clear that Miller's language remains unacceptable.

Over the weekend, many members are met by home-schoolers in their districts. Most importantly, Speaker Tom Foley is confronted by dozens of home-schoolers and promises to support the Armey amendment.

Monday, February 21. Miller sends out a "Dear Colleague" letter blaming "the far right" for the telephone blitz. The letter's petulant tone and personal attacks elicit a letter from Armey protesting that Miller's conduct violates House rules on collegiality.

Two Christian school associations, the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the American Association of Christian Schools (AACS), join the home-schoolers' fight, and send out mailings and fax alerts. Armey's language is updated and a national fax alert goes out to home-schoolers with the most recent language.

Rush Limbaugh discusses the home-school telephone blitz of Congress. (But, contrary to the later complaints of Democrats—oblivious to the size of both the home-schooling forces and Christian radio and TV broadcasting—Limbaugh was not the source of it.)

At 10 p.m., a thousand people gather in Dallas at a home-school rally.

Tuesday, February 22. The phone blitz continues. A number of congressmen instruct staff to stop answering all calls.

Pennsylvania Rep. Bill Goodling, the ranking Republican on the Education and Labor Committee, undermines Armey's efforts by publicly denying that Miller's amendment threatens home schools.

Wednesday, February 23. The phone calls continue. Home-schoolers arrive on Capitol Hill from Georgia, Missouri, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, as an ice storm hits Washington. ACSI reports it has contacted its 3,000 schools. Mike Farris spends an hour on Pat Buchanan's radio show.

While many parochial schools and home-schooling Catholics join the fight, the U.S. Catholic Conference, which has refused to join the fight against teacher certification, complains that Armey's amendment might endanger their members who receive federal funds.

Thursday, February 24. Dick Armey sends out a "Dear Colleague" letter explaining that a compromise amendment by Education and Labor Committee Chairman William Ford will not protect home-schoolers.

At 9 a.m., Democrats on the Rules Committee introduce a wrong version of the Armey amendment for the day's votes. Dale Kildee (D-Mich.) solicits and then sends out a letter from the Catholic Conference attacking Armey. Armey wants to change the language of his amendment to allay the Catholic Conference, but the Rules committee chairman, Joe Moakley of Massachusetts, is the only person who can allow this last-minute, on-the-floor maneuver. Home-schoolers in Massachusetts call Moakley; within an hour, Moakley's staff announces that Moakley will support Armey's change.

At 1:54 p.m., the Ford compromise amendment passes with 424 votes. Only Miller votes no. Home-schoolers see the compromise as a fig leaf. At 1:57, Armey asks for—and receives—Unanimous Consent of the House to modify his amendment. A single congressman could stop Armey from presenting the amendment he wants. None does.

At 2 p.m., debate begins on the final language of Armey's Home School/Private School Freedom Amendment.

At 3:38 p.m., the Armey amendment passes, 374 to 53.

Armey gives credit to the home-schoolers for being prepared. "They knew the Clinton administration would make a move against home-schoolers on behalf of the NEA. They didn't know when, but they were ready." Farris adds that home-schooling is the central organizing principle of the lives of hundreds of thousands of parents. They were defending their homes and their children. "They are exhibiting enormous personal responsibility in their families and they want enormous personal freedom." And while their strong reaction might have surprised congressional members, Farris notes that home-schoolers are battle-tested veterans of fifty fights at the state level over the last ten years.

Other members of Congress who watched the precision drill of Dick Armey in the House and Mike Farris and the home-schoolers on the outside attribute the home-schoolers' success to several factors:

(1) They picked the right champion. Armey was willing to fight it out. He refused to compromise, knowing that almost every member of Congress from the speaker on down had promised home-schoolers in their districts that they would vote for his amendment and that compromises like the Ford amendment would not suffice.

(2) They went for total victory, not simply protecting themselves from attack, but rolling back the other threats to home-schoolers in the bill and also protecting private schools.

(3) They did not fall for the Democrats' ploy of "Get them to stop calling and then I'll vote for you" (as in

(continued on page 91)

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Quiet Flow the Dons

by Jonas Bernstein

St. Petersburg seemed even more decayed than in December, when I was last there. As the train approached the city, the landscape was post-nuclear—sprawling, decrepit factories separated by large, vacant snow-covered fields spotted with chemical cesspools. The factories were idle. Maybe it was still too early in the morning, or perhaps they were just among the thousands of bankrupt state enterprises, victims of the "payments crisis"—theoretically in operation, but whose employees are on leave. Permanent leave.

Petersburg's main cemetery was having its own payments crisis: unburied bodies, apparently dropped off by relatives who could not afford the funeral costs, were beginning to pile up. Following media reports of birds picking at limbs hanging out of boxes, Mayor Anatoly Sobchak ordered these unclaimed corpses buried, firing some administrators in the process. The mayor could then return to the more congenial business of fighting for his political life.

Along Petersburg's aging Communist-built roads, the sinkholes seemed more formidable even than Moscow's, in which drivers have drowned. "*Kashmar*," my cabbie said, as he skirted something that looked like a scale model of the Black Sea. "Nightmare."

I was in town to do a story about crime. In 1993, murder and grievous bodily harm in St. Petersburg had doubled since the previous year, and quadrupled since 1990. While roughly half the cases were booze-fueled family or personal feuds, the other half involved "business" disputes. That kind of mayhem is growing rapidly, leaving those charged with cleaning up the mess rather cynical about Russia's "transition." I asked police officials and journalists about a think-tank study released last winter that claimed 70 percent of all privatized businesses in Russia make payoffs to racketeers, often amounting to more than half of a business's profits. They all assured me the figure was higher in Petersburg.

Alexander Smirnov, the 23-year-old producer of "Criminal Dossier," a "Cops"-like TV show sponsored by the St. Petersburg police, rolled his eyes when I mentioned the government's efforts to fight crime. "Nobody wants to fight it," said Smirnov, laying out conspiratorial but compelling reasons why. "I think the so-called 'second faces' in the Communist Party made perestroika to convert their power into money. They control the KGB, the KGB controls organized criminals. Organized criminals control all the businesses. So these people have their employees in government, in the KGB, in police headquarters. That is why nobody really wants to fight criminals.

"We have here in St. Petersburg a bank established by Communists, KGB, and police officials of the seventies. Everything is quiet and peaceful for them: they have a lot of money and there are no criminals hanging around. But if you are a young worker, teacher or engineer, not a party official, and you try to start a business, criminals will come and say: 'You have to pay.'"

Smirnov and other crime-watchers see a worm at the heart of even the most rosy developments in post-Communist Russia. Take the booming private real-estate market: Smirnov described how some Petersburg companies pay 5 percent of each commission to a service which "makes the apartment comfortable for the people who are moving in." In reality, he said, this means paying a criminal to clear the flat of its previous tenants. Similar crimes are occurring in Moscow: police there are investigating hundreds of cases of people who have disappeared under circumstances involving the privatization of their apartments.

But do crime and corruption necessarily preclude economic growth, rising standards of living, and the formation of a middle class? The experience of Colombia and Italy would suggest otherwise. And in Russia—or Moscow, at any rate—gangsters are not the only nouveaux riches cruising around in foreign-make cars. Criminalized or not, the new wealth has spread. You can see it in the people walking their exotic dogs in the park across my street (formerly Ulitsa Salvador Allende) and buying Pedigree Pal at a local kiosk. Or the

Jonas Bernstein, a contributor to The American Spectator, *is a writer living in Moscow.*

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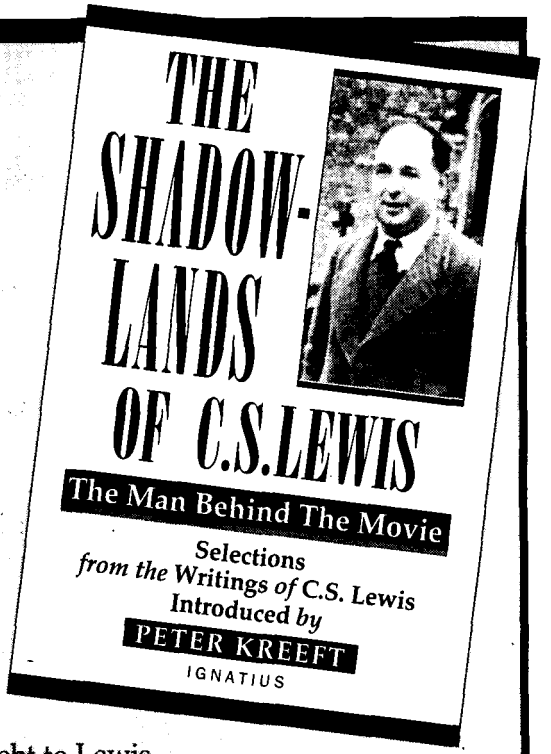
The Shadow-Lands of C.S. Lewis

The Man Behind the Movie



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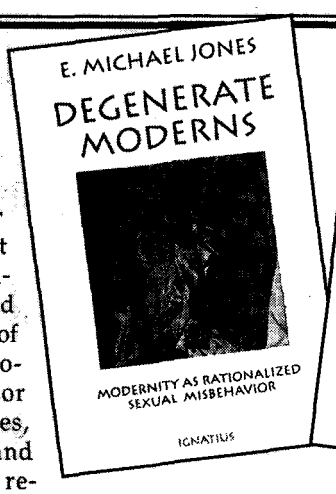
Degenerate Moderns

E. Michael Jones



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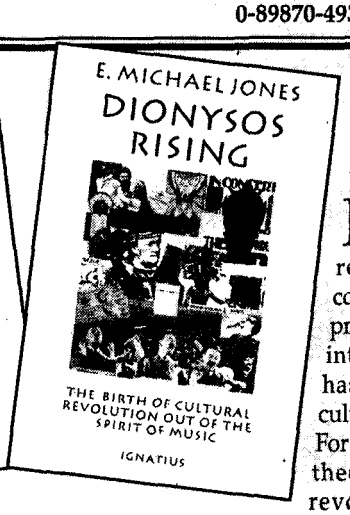

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young girls with orthodontia. Or the Muscovites now walking around with buttons reading: "Want to lose weight? Ask me how." While the average life expectancy for Russian men dropped to 59 last year, sales of TV sets rose by 34 percent, radios by 45 percent, and refrigerators by 60 percent.

Unfortunately, the accumulation of wealth here is following not the Italian but the Zairean model. Last year, an estimated $15 billion left the country. Private U.S. investment in Russia last year amounted to $1 billion, a mere third of the amount U.S. companies have invested in Hungary. According to the interior ministry, smuggling of Russia's natural resources, from timber to uranium, was up 50 percent in 1993, and "better organized than ever." At least a third of the rubles converted into dollars on the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange last year had been embezzled. Such money, undoubtedly, was westward-bound.

Which leaves discrepancies *à la* Zaire. My landlady's husband died recently, after a horrifying kitchen accident in which he accidentally set himself on fire. She—thanks to donations from a hard-currency lodger and her husband's former colleagues—was able to scrape together $500 for a funeral. At that price, however, all she could afford was a cremation. It was a ghastly affair.

It began at the morgue, where her husband's longtime friends raised toasts while employees continued about their work, running from office to office and barging through the gathered mourners. At one point, they asked Tanya to wrap things up, as there were at least three other funeral parties lined up outside, waiting to use the room. Later, following a pro-forma eulogy by a crematorium functionary, Tanya watched as her companion of fifty years was placed in a cheap wooden box and carried on a conveyor belt through two black doors, to the accompaniment of piped-in organ music.

On April 14, meanwhile, the body of Otari Kvantrishvili was lowered into the ground in an oak casket with a silver Russian Orthodox cross. The burial followed a lavish ceremony attended by prominent Russian entertainers and politicians. Kvantrishvili, who was assassinated earlier in the month, had been one of Moscow's top mafia bosses. ❐

Dwight Stuff

by Kenneth S. Lynn

At a *Partisan Review* party for Simone de Beauvoir in 1947, the guest of honor asked Dwight Macdonald what life was like in New York. Like "living in a concentration camp," he responded bitterly. If Beauvoir knew his essays, his answer could not have surprised her. No other American writer, not even the later Mark Twain, passed more caustic judgments on the land of his birth than Macdonald habitually did. At the same time, he regarded his own life as a tissue of failures, and he kept a careful record of his disappointments. As Michael Wreszin makes clear in his intelligent and well-researched biography of Macdonald,[1] it particularly bothered him that he had never had the self-discipline to produce a major book. Helped along by twenty drinks a day (bourbon and martinis, mostly), the essayist was famous in the circles he traveled in for his exuberance; from Greenwich Village to Wellfleet, the sound of his screech-owl voice and nervous giggle rose above the din of a thousand cocktail parties. But the day-long pace of his drinking was not the life pattern of a happy man.

In the poll of undergraduate opinion on the Yale campus regarding the presidential election of 1924, the young Macdonald could have backed the third-party ticket headed by Robert M. La Follette, the revered Wisconsin Progressive, as a means of signalling his disgusted conclusion that the Democratic candidate, John W. Davis, was no better than President Coolidge. Instead, he cast his straw ballot for the Communist in the race, William Z. Foster. Parlor radicalism, however, did not keep him from opting upon graduation for a business career. At Macy's, he quickly learned that he didn't have a practical mind and lacked an aptitude for command. Hired as a writer on fellow Yaleman Henry Luce's *Fortune*, he projected an ambitious series of articles on the steel industry, into which he intended to insinuate his contempt for the industry's top managers as beefy predators whose policies were as uncreative as they were irresponsible. On a preparatory field trip to the Pittsburgh area in the fall of 1935, he was shocked by the squalor of company towns. Yet while his sympathy for the workers who lived in them knew no bounds, he restricted his soundings out of their political temper to the radical activists in their midst. For like many other alienated New York intellectuals, Macdonald was caught up at the moment in visions of revolution in America. What was decisive for his assessment of the future of the steel industry was not the halfhearted job of fact-gathering he did in his field trip, but his prior absorption of the Englishman John Strachey's Marxist analysis, in *The Coming Struggle for Power* (1935), of the contradictions and inevitable decline of capitalism. Tom Girdler of Republic Steel and his fellow magnates were historically doomed, Macdonald was sure.

To this chimerical prophecy he shortly added another. A headlong reading of Lawrence Dennis's *The Coming*

[1] *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition: The Life and Politics of Dwight Macdonald.* Basic Books, 590 pages, $30.

Kenneth S. Lynn, the author of Hemingway, *is currently at work on a book on the life and times of Charlie Chaplin.*

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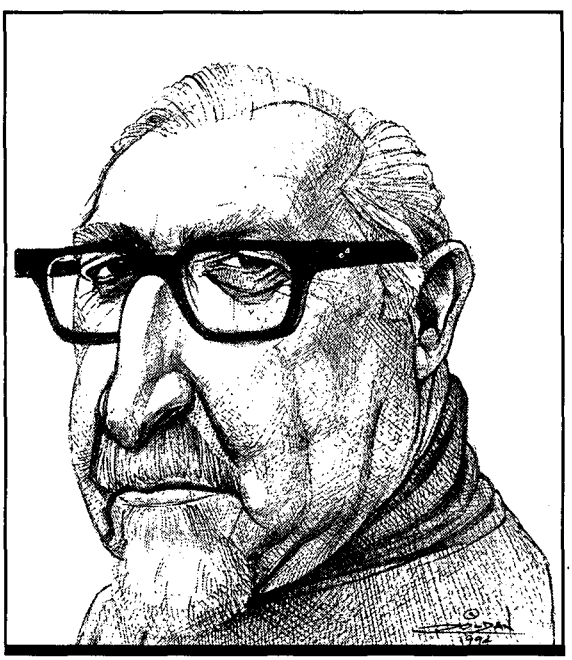
American Fascism (1936) served to persuade him that a totalitarian America was indeed a possibility. After all, he argued in a review of Dennis's book in a misnamed publication called *Common Sense*, most intelligent Americans would certainly agree that Fascism was "superior to liberal capitalism as a technique for running modern society." What he really meant by that amazing statement was that his own feelings about Mussolini and Hitler were mixed. To be sure, he "ridiculed their bombast and posturing," as Michael Wreszin says, but he also had a "sneaking admiration for them." The real villain in the modern world in his view was the concept of democracy, which had elevated the bovine masses to a political role beyond their capacity. Was it any wonder that clever demagogues had been able to strip these fools of their power in so many countries?

Macdonald's FBI file affirms that "the indices of the New York office reflect that [he] enrolled under the Communist Party Emblem in New York City in the 1936 Election Registration." Consistency, however, was not one of the hobgoblins of this man's mind. While he would never shave off the Leninesque goatee that he affected in the mid-thirties, his habit of switching allegiances eventually prompted an ex-friend to dub him "the Peter Pan of the Left." Reports in the waning days of 1936 from the Loyalist side of the Spanish Civil War spoke of Communist intrigues against anarchist and Trotskyist revolutionaries. News of the first purge trials in Moscow were also coming in at this time, and Trotskyists in New York were actively recruiting intellectuals into their ranks. One morning, Macdonald met with Philip Rahv and William Phillips in Phillips's apartment. Rahv and Phillips had severed their ties with the Communist Party and suspended the publication of their magazine, the *Partisan Review*, which had been financed by the Party. They spoke to Macdonald of their hopes of re-establishing the magazine as an independent radical journal in opposition to Stalinist politics on the one hand and to Popular Front shibboleths about literature and culture on the other. Since Rahv and Phillips wanted Macdonald's editorial participation in their project, they first had to turn him around politically by destroying his fellow-traveler illusions about Stalin. They did so, brutally. At one point, Phillips's wife called out from the next room, "Leave him alone, leave him alone, leave him alone. Let him breathe."

For Macdonald that morning was unforgettable. As he got into the research, fourteen years later, on what would prove to be a brilliantly deflationary piece on the overrated Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union, he came to see that Baldwin was a classic—and unrepentant—example of the sort of thirties left-liberal he himself had once been: a severe critic of the U.S.'s shortcomings, an automatic apologist for the Soviet Union, and a generous supporter of Communist-front organizations.



Unfortunately, there was more than a little madness in the new stances that the post-Stalinoid Macdonald adopted. Because the Socialist Workers Party was pacifistic, he joined it, out of the conviction that American intervention in a European war would inevitably bring a rightist dictatorship to power in Washington. In the November-December 1941 issue of the *Partisan Review*, he published a foaming diatribe entitled "Kulturbolshewismus and Van Wyck Brooks," in which the 55-year-old author of "America's Coming-of-Age" (1915) and *The Flowering of New England* (1936) was excoriated as the "leading mouthpiece for totalitarian values" for having spoken out against the adversarial-minded masters of literary modernism who had failed to rally to the support of their government and society in a time of maximum peril for democracy.

And in the magazine of his own, called *Politics*, that Macdonald launched at the mid-point of America's involvement in World War II, he quasi-treasonously depicted the U.S. Army as an institution that was poisoning the body politic by training young men to be efficient at and to glory in mindless brutality.

According to Macdonald, mass culture, too, was a totalitarian phenomenon wherever it manifested itself. Nazi culture, Stalinist culture, and American culture were all alike in their vulgar manipulation of the mass mind. Only in the case of America, however, did Macdonald describe the phenomenon as a debilitating disease. "If the U.S. doesn't or cannot change its mass culture (movies, radio, sports cult, comics, television, slick magazines)," he warned in 1950 in yet another of his breathtakingly wrongheaded prophecies, "it will lose the war against the USSR. Americans have been made into permanent adolescents by advertising, mass culture. . . . Friendship is sending Xmas cards, sex is the wet dream of those chromium-plated Hollywood glamor girls, death—is not."

He had his bloody nerve inveighing against sex. In the social set that the twice-married Macdonald partied with during Wellfleet vacations, adulterous affairs, mainly within the group, were an accepted procedure, and nude swimming at Slough Pond was de rigueur—for Macdonald at any rate. Thus, Saul Bellow's portrait of him in *Humboldt's Gift*, as the "lightweight" intellectual Orlando Higgins, contains a wickedly amusing description of Higgins and a friend discussing the McCarthy hearings while sitting stark naked on a log. Higgins's "penis which lay before him on the water-smoothed wood expressed all the fluctuations of his interest." As Higgins gave his views with much puffing and "a neighing stammer, his genital went back and forth like the slide of a trombone." Bellow ended the

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passage by saying, "You could never feel unfriendly toward a man of whom you kept such a memory."

Macdonald's judgment of middlebrow culture was that it was a contemptible alternative to mass culture. Nevertheless, he went to work, in 1952, for the *New Yorker*. It was here, amidst all the glossy ads, that he did his best work, as a cultural demolition expert in the Menckenian mode. His exhaustive review of Mortimer J. Adler's 54-volume edition (plus a two-volume index called a Synopticon) of the Great Books of the Western World was hilariously funny and full of wise words about the experience of reading. Another triumph was his devastating critique of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. And *New Yorker* editor William Shawn did not exaggerate by much when he hailed the Macdonald review of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible as "a masterpiece." Much less penetrating were the commentaries on the movies that he published, mainly in *Esquire*, although it still is refreshing to think of his dismissal of Paul Newman as "simply not an actor and possibly not even alive." He also deserves our gratitude for the cultural generalization that in the case of "certain social groups" the "pendulum of social justice has swung back too far." Long before the critics of PC emerged, Macdonald opined that if he were to write about "what Sitting Bull did to General Custer, some Indian Protective League would spring into action."

With the rise of the protest movement against the Vietnam war, Macdonald embraced not only New Left politics but also the lifestyle of the youthful counterculture. A decade earlier, he had denounced America's "permanent adolescents," but now he became one. At the Arts Festival in the Johnson White House, he arrived wearing tennis shoes, and plunged downhill from there into depths of boorish behavior that embarrassed virtually everyone present. Throughout the long thirteen-hour day, he loudly attempted to secure signatures from among the 400 invitees to an anti-Johnson foreign-policy petition, but was successful only in seven instances. For while there were a good many anti-war activists in the crowd, they honored the fact that they were guests in the President's house.

As a longtime defender of elitist, high-brow culture, Macdonald ought to have defended the universities against the onslaughts of the bearded and braless vandals. Instead, he joined the uprising at Columbia. "Invoking landmarks of the Russian Revolution," biographer Wreszin writes, he "described the math building as 'the Smolny Institute of the revolution, the ultraleft SDS stronghold,'" and to an old prep-school teacher of his at Phillips Exeter he proposed that the revolutionary young were "the best generation I have known in this country, the cleverest and the most serious and decent."

In a stirring summation of Macdonald in the dozen years before his death in 1982, Wreszin speaks more favorably of him than I would wish to. Yet Wreszin makes a case for him as a member of a vanishing breed of irrepressibly individualistic naysayers that our suffocatingly institutionalized world ought to ponder. So I will give him—and the historian John Lukacs, whom he quotes—the final word about Macdonald:

> Many people loved being with him, loved his generally good humor. Others found him garrulous and irritating. Some people he had known well and worked with in the sixties, such as Jason Epstein and Norman Podhoretz, and others in the publishing and editing world, became impatient with him and avoided him when possible, ignored him at parties, and were not averse to labeling him an old fool and a has-been. In the competitive intellectual world, Dwight had never nurtured his career, had never been cautious and circumspect. . . . There were many who owed him debts, for he had been so outgoing, so helpful to aspiring writers and editors throughout his life. He never called in any debts. To some it seemed that Dwight was, at a crucial moment in his life, being marginalized by a younger generation of intellectuals who were obsessed by "making it." John Lukacs sees him as a tragic victim of the "bureaucratization of intellectual life," which produced a new breed of intellectuals whose "unceasing concern with public success or academic careers" was pursued "at the expense of authenticity and originality and often personal probity itself." ❐

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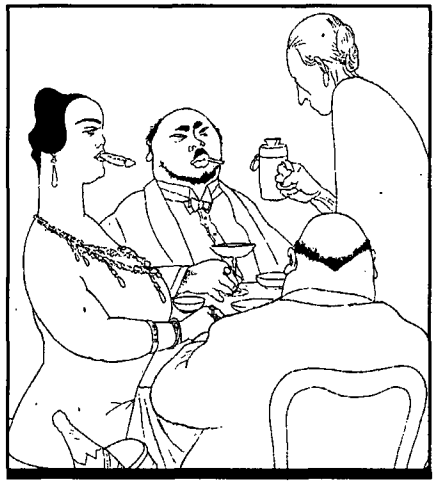
Proxysms

by James Bowman

More and more it is beginning to seem as if the armies of postmodernism—dressed, I fancy, with comic opera panache and led by Leslie Nielsen as Lt. Frank Drebin in apron and furry mules—have conquered and occupied dear old Hollywood. These are not the elite corps of academics, the Waffen SS led by Foucault and Derrida, but a ragtag army of couch potatoes who make movies more about other movies than about real life—either simply to send them up, like *Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult*, or for more obscure reasons. Perhaps it is because, like Ron "Opie" Howard (director of *The Paper*), they have much more experience of movies and television than they do of real life. Or perhaps it is because, like Roman Polanski (director of *Bitter Moon*), they are so jaded and tired of the conventions of their art that they send them up, almost automatically, just for a laugh, just to relieve the boredom of too many fictions.

The Paper, for instance, is based at least as much on old newspaper movies as it is on real newspapers. In particular, it looks back to the classics of this genre, like *The Front Page* and *His Girl Friday*, where the reporters were always quick-witted and funny, as well as cynical and hard-boiled. There's nothing inherently wrong with another movie about funny, outrageous, fast-talking reporters, but somehow this one doesn't ring true, even though a lot of the jokes are funny. You can tell that something is not quite right because it became a Hollywood event and real New York reporters were fighting each other for cameo roles and for tickets to the gala premiere. In other words, it is another one of the beautiful people's home movies, like *The Player*, which flatters and romanticizes them even when it pretends to be ripping the lid off the secrets they don't want the public to know.

Surprise! They *do* want us to know—and they want us to admire them all the more. What would a movie like this be without a line like: "You're accurate, ethical, and I want you out of this building"? But it turns out that it's only a jest. Actually, practically everybody is accurate and ethical—and very boring about it they are, too. The ostensible conflict that provides the mainspring of the plot is between the city editor (Michael Keaton) and his managing editor (Glenn Close) over stopping the presses to



include a story which is (a) a huge scoop and (b) an exoneration of a couple of decent black kids who, had the story not run, would have been proclaimed to the world as murderers. The managing editor wants to save some money by sticking more closely to the production schedule.

Who do you think is right? Who do you think is going to win? But this is not any more fudged or simple-minded than the film's other major conflict—between work and family. Turns out that Michael Keaton and Marisa Tomei can have it all, even if poor old Robert Duvall cannot. Howard makes the moral issues a little too easy even for postmodernism. At least Joel and Ethan Coen seem to have had a purpose in their exhumation of *His Girl Friday* in ***The Hudsucker Proxy***. The Coens are the American masters of the postmodern style of movies about movies, and their *Miller's Crossing* is one of only two in that style that I know of (the other is Jaco van Dormael's *Toto the Hero*) with something more than wit and sophistication—with, that is, the power to touch our hearts possessed by the old movies that they parody.

Unfortunately, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, is not in that class. It is the sort of film that the Papuans might make if they were to appoint, as Saul Bellow assures us they never do, Papuan anthropologists to study contemporary America from the record of its commercial films. It is set in a city that looks like New York but is not, at a time that is supposed to be 1959 but is not, and purports to be about the invention of the hula hoop but is not. Its hero is an innocent, Candide-like figure, played by Tim Robbins, who is supposed to be an imbecile but is not. He must learn the lessons taught by all the old movies—to be true to himself and the girl who loves him and not to be spoiled by success—but here the lessons are overwhelmed by the clever, knowing, self-regarding postmodern tricks that still knew their place in *Miller's Crossing*.

Perhaps the Coens themselves have been spoiled by success. Certainly Barry Levinson has since his charming early films *Diner* and *Tin Men*. His latest, ***Jimmy Hollywood***, is overloaded with artistic pretension and postmodern technique and itself falls foul of the very foible it purports ever so gently to mock. This is the actor's, and in particular the would-be actor's, inability to distinguish between illusion and reality. Joe

James Bowman, The American Spectator*'s movie critic, is the American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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Pesci plays Jimmy Alto, a failed actor whose big break as a media star comes when he becomes an anti-crime vigilante. With nothing more than a starting pistol he is shown catching criminal after criminal and never coming to any harm himself. He is there at carjackings and drug buys miraculously to put a stop to them and deliver the criminals bound to the police in an instant and without breaking a sweat. It may be that Levinson is trying to do something very bold and daringly postmodern here, but I suspect he has just shown that even postmodernism must be grounded in a modicum of reality.

Roman Polanski from his Parisian exile has also, it seems, been dabbling in postmodernism. From the schmaltzy score by Vangelis to the echoes of old tough-guy clichés in the flashback narration by Oscar (Peter Coyote), his ***Bitter Moon*** drags out the story of a tragic love affair to such lengths of melodrama that it becomes a comedy, an amusing tale of failure and self-destruction that has the authentic hard and glittering surface of the postmodern tale: full of cleverness and sparkling irony but without an ounce of real feeling. Coyote, whose name is itself a postmodern touch, plays a crippled American would-be novelist in Paris whose idols are Hemingway and Fitzgerald and Henry Miller but who is hopelessly out of their league as a prose stylist.

Oscar's great work proves to be the narration of the story of his romance with his wife, which he tries to tell in the style of his tough-guy heroes. Instead, he only manages to produce the clichés of bad art, which distance us from him and hopelessly spoil the authenticity of what he is trying to relate. "Eternity for me began one fall day in Paris . . ." we hear him say—not once but several times. And we groan every time. "The gates of paradise opened," he says, or "forever's a long time, baby," or "I pressed my lips to hers as if I was mashing a butt in an ashtray" or "I loved her too, but our credit was running out and we were headed for sexual bankruptcy."

Cringe, cringe, cringe. And Polanski savors every cringe. He even puts Hugh Grant—who shows in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* what a good line in abject embarrassment he has—on the screen to cringe for us. Grant listens to that story with the mixture of interest and aversion that we ourselves feel and so puts even more distance between us and the inept narration of Oscar. The latter's account of what Grant calls "your perverted sex life" to a total stranger makes us laugh at that which this failed novelist obviously intends should be taken as partly inspirational ("I want to expand your sexual horizons," he tells Grant) and partly redolent of deep and tragic pathos.

Postmodernism does not do deep and tragic pathos. It only does comedy well. That is why the Movie of the postmodern Month is John Waters's hilarious ***Serial Mom***, with Kathleen Turner as the housewife-cum-serial killer ("Don't be silly," she says brightly, "the only cereal I know anything about is Rice Krispies!") who terrorizes a suburban Baltimore neighborhood. Waters juxtaposes the bland, suburban, Ozzie-and-Harriet existence of the Sutphin family—which of course has never existed and could never exist outside of sitcomland—with the equally artificial world of putatively scary but ultimately comic slasher movies. These also make their appearance, in excerpted form, with the help of the sitcom son Chip (Matthew Lillard), who has a wholesome and scholarly interest in cinematic gore.

The comic possibilities are obvious and classic Waters, but his purpose here encompasses a larger and more specific ambition: not merely to parody the media culture in general but also to send up one of Hollywood's newest and silliest clichés: the tough-gal flick. There are echoes here of *Thelma and Louise* and *Basic Instinct* and others of the genre, but Waters is not just doing pastiche. Rather, he puts his tough gal, Turner—who perhaps established her credentials for the role by starring a few years ago in one of the first and the worst of the tough-gal flicks, *V.I.Warshawski*—in a context where we expect an old-fashioned, fifties style of femininity. This is not just fraught with comic potential, it is a brilliant idea for social satire.

Beverly Sutphin, Turner's character, is obsessive about cleanliness and decorum, does not allow gum chewing in her house, and sternly disapproves of the use of foul language. When Chip lets slip a scatological epithet, she says: "Chip! You know how I hate the brown word." But when Chip and his sitcom sister Misty (Ricki Lake) and their sitcom dad, a dim dentist played by Sam Waterston, leave the house, she makes obscene phone calls to a frightened neighbor (Mink Stole), reads about notorious killers and carries on a clandestine correspondence with Richard Speck and Ted Bundy. When Chip's math teacher tells her that the boy should see a counselor about his unhealthy interest in horror films—and then compounds the offense by putting a stick of chewing gum in his mouth—she runs him down with the family station wagon and then backs over him to finish him off.

Later she kills a boy who has stood Misty up and a couple who have said insulting things about her husband. In short, she is the perfect mother: not only can she make a great meatloaf and perform spectacularly in bed, but she also stands up—and mows down—for her brood. She also kills for a standard of fastidiousness that comes out of as bygone an era as that of the perfect housewife and homemaker. A woman customer at the video store where Chip works doesn't rewind the tapes when she brings them back and Serial Mom beats her to death with a roast, screaming at her "Rewind!" When one of Chip's friends with whom she is constantly annoyed for not buckling his seatbelt reveals that he suspects her of the murders, she chases him down and burns him to death, shouting: "Buckle up, Scottie!"

In the denouement she continues the superwoman theme by defending herself at her trial and annihilating the case of the prosecution with a mixture of lawyerly technique learned from television and appeals to suburban prejudices. In one case she discredits a witness by asking: "Do you recycle?" and then looking on in satisfaction as her reply in the negative elicits a gasp of horror from the courtroom. Later, after she gets off, she beats to death a juror (Patty Hearst) who has annoyed her throughout the trial by wearing white shoes after Labor Day. Without the context of the Hollywood tough gal—as well as that of the daytime talk-shows and "A Current Affair," which the family exploit during mom's trial—this would just be the exercise in Watersesque bizarrerie that some critics seem to think it is. With it, he is able to make the exquisite joke of bringing on Suzanne Sommers to play Serial Mom in the TV mini series and have her say: "I will play her with the dignity that this feminist heroine deserves." Rarely if ever has postmodern satire risen to such heights. ❐

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IF YOU'RE TALKING TO ME, YOUR CAREER MUST BE IN TROUBLE: MOVIES, MAYHEM, AND MALICE

Joe Queenan

Hyperion / 267 pages / $22.95

reviewed by ANDREW FERGUSON

Mr. Pulitzer, meet Mr. Joe Queenan, the hottest, zaniest, most wacked-out young humorist this side of Dave Barry and P.J. O'Rourke, a Mark Twain for the '90s.

That's what we call a blurb, a perfect blurb. It fulfills all the conventions of the blurb-using community. It is suspiciously self-contained—a pre-packaged and easily excisable clump of praise, suitable for framing on the back of the book when it comes out in paperback. It compares its subject to other authors who have been stupendously successful with book-buyers. One of its comparisons—to Mark Twain—is implausible. The blurb, moreover, is inaccurate in two ways: first, Pulitzer committees do not give prizes to collections of previously published magazine articles, though they have seen their way clear to giving prizes to Anna Quindlen, and second, Joe Queenan is no longer young. And lastly, and most importantly, it violates all kinds of conflict-of-interest strictures, because it was written by someone, me, who is a close friend of the author in question. But that's why I wrote the blurb in the first place. So it's like a Catch-22. What are you going to do?

Well, you could start by buying this book and reading it, which is advice I would give even had I never met Queenan and become his friend (which is no day at the beach, by the way). Joe is known to readers of this magazine as a contributor of long standing, not to mention a contributor of more lucrative articles to *GQ*, the late and not particularly lamented *Spy*, and *Rolling Stone*. His subject matter has always been diverse: he has made fun of the world's largest mall, which is in Canada, and of minimalist fiction writers with equally unforgiving animosity. In 1990 he started contributing regularly to *Movieline*, a kind of anti-fanzine published in Hollywood. And so he began making fun of the movies.

Other funny writers have done this, going all the way back to Robert Benchley, but only episodically. Movies are a tempting target for the satirist, because most movies are made by dolts and it shows. Queenan was uniquely equipped for sustained labor. Not only is his knowledge of movies encyclopedic, his visual sense highly refined, his nose for cant and sham unerring. And not only is he a gifted stylist whose prose swings effortlessly from scabrous insult to semi-serious praise. Joe Queenan had something more: he was actually willing to stay home and watch movies for uninterrupted weeks at a time. He watched *Heaven's Gate* and *Orca*; he has watched every Barbra Streisand movie. No other humorist would watch *Yentl* and *A Star Is Born* back to back. Other humorists have better things to do. Not Queenan. Not Joe.

The result is this book, a collection of twenty-four pieces, all but a handful from *Movieline*. The important word here is collection. The book is not a sustained *étude* on the state of American film, although Queenan does speak French. No one will sit down and read the book from cover to cover, except Joe. You would risk organ damage, for—and I'm being serious now—there is a line to make you laugh out loud on nearly every page. Queenan's humor is better savored in measured doses—a chapter on Oliver Stone's fascination with head trauma here, a dissection of the Streisand oeuvre there. The book hangs together anyway, for certain themes recur. Actually, certain *jokes* recur, as the author himself cheerfully admits:

> This is *not* the result of an editing oversight. Rather, this repetition of certain pejorative remarks stems from my personal belief that it is impossible to remind the public too often that Diane Keaton is a really awful actress, just as it is impossible to make too many nasty remarks about short, bad actors related to Martin Sheen. With this in mind, I would hope that the reader would look upon these running jokes not so much as running jokes, but as *leitmotifs*. *Leitmotif*, for the uninitiated, is one of many words that Lou Diamond Phillips probably cannot spell.

I laughed at this last line even though I have only the vaguest idea who Lou Diamond Phillips is. By page 8, I had laughed at three separate Vincent Spano jokes, before it

Andrew Ferguson is a senior writer at the Washingtonian.

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occurred to me that I had never heard of Vincent Spano. This says something about the movies: they are so overpopulated with pampered, ridiculous jerks that you can be reasonably confident that any person mentioned in relation to them is a pampered, ridiculous jerk even when you don't know who he is. But it also says something about Queenan: few satirists have shown such relish, or such skill, in making fun of pampered, ridiculous jerks. It's not as easy as it looks. You really do, for starters, have to stay home and watch all those movies. Dave Barry calls Queenan's method "informed viciousness," and he's right: his viciousness wouldn't be nearly so funny if he didn't know what he was talking about.

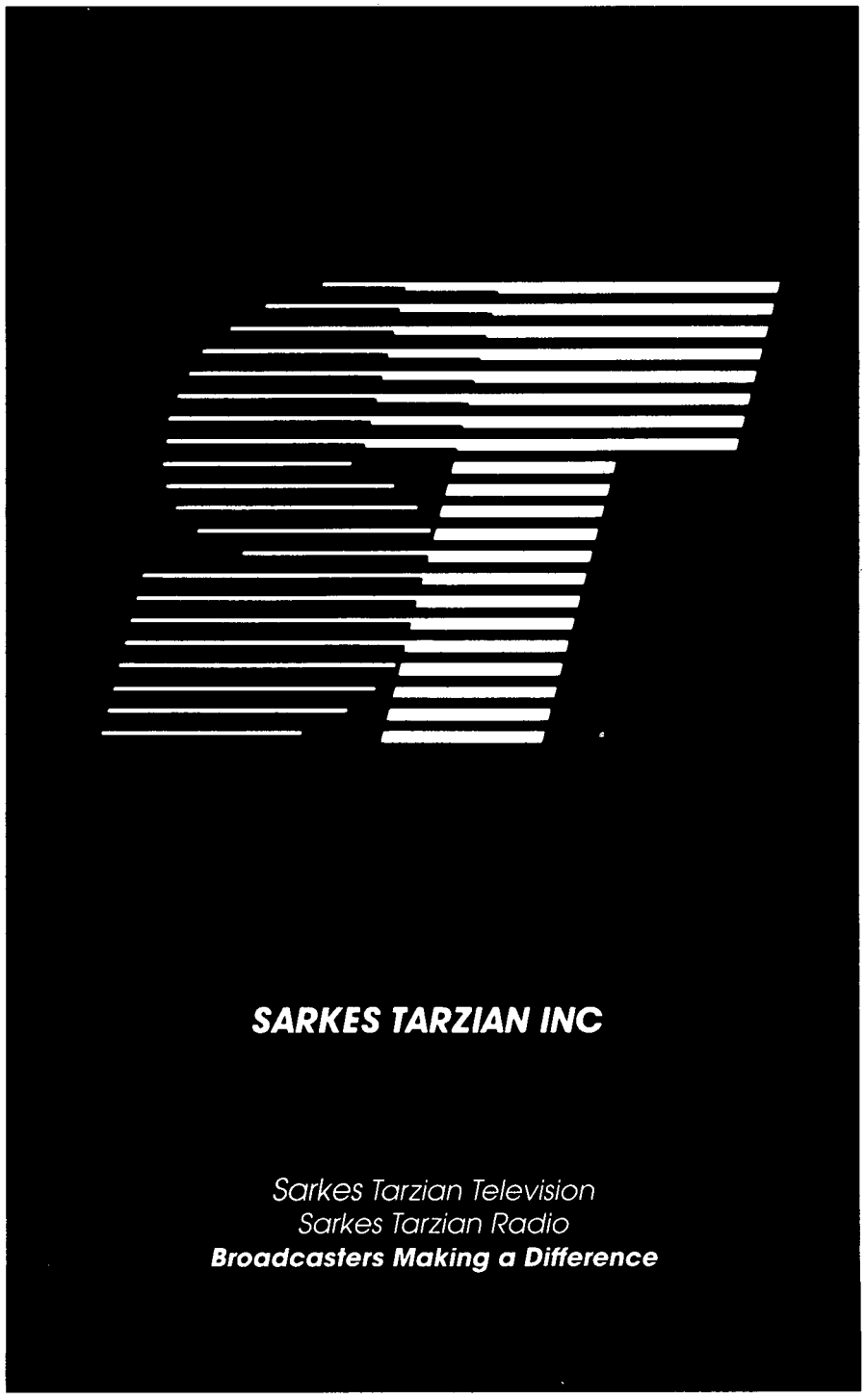
More important, you have to have an unerring feel for the soft spot, the point at which the maximum damage can be inflicted with the least apparent effort. Here, for example, is the perfect summary of the mind and heart of Melanie Griffith, who has come a long way since she told *Seventeen* magazine, these many years ago, that she wanted only to travel to the Sorbonne and study philosophy:

> Because Griffith has played so many nymphets, sexpots, hookers, strippers, party girls—or what the *New York Times* calls "sirens"—an unsophisticated moviegoer might find himself or herself asking the question: Is Melanie Griffith herself a bimbo? Clearly there are bimbonic qualities to her personality; she talks like an idiot and does not always give the impression in interviews that she is participating in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Directed Readings Program. And anyone who beats out professional porn film stars such as Annette Haven for a role as a professional porn film star—as Griffith did in *Body Double*—has clearly been spending more time in nightclubs than, say, the Sorbonne.

Queenan's conclusion, by the way, is kinder than this passage would suggest. Melanie, he reasons, "is a cunning actress who masquerades as bimbos in order to draw attention to the plight of the bimbo." It's a complicated argument.

At the risk of embarrassing him (not an easy thing to do), I should add that, along with the laughs, Queenan also writes about the movies with genuine sophistication. His essay about Alfred Hitchcock, "The Man Who Did Not Love Women," is a dead-on accounting of the tubby auteur's greatness, which managed to overcome some of the stupidest plots since the Restoration. And in "The Lonely Raging Bull," Queenan places Martin Scorsese in the second rank of great directors, a Dan Marino to, say, Fellini's Joe Montana. This is judicious, and true. Here, obviously, is a man who has been doing more than just staying home watching movies for uninterrupted weeks at a time. Here is a man who has been staying home reading books about the movies, too.

Queenan is so comfortable writing about the movies that, for his next book, he is going to write one, and then film it, for $6,998. He's already taken an adult-education class in movie directing, so it should be good. Great, even. Mr. Oscar, meet Mr. Joe Queenan . . . ❐



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CONQUEST: MONTEZUMA, CORTES, AND THE FALL OF MEXICO

Hugh Thomas

Simon & Schuster / 812 pages / $30

reviewed by DONALD LYONS

It was an amazing feat, the conquest of the mighty Aztec Empire by some 530 Spanish adventurers under the resourceful leadership of hidalgo Hernan Cortes in 1519-21. The story has had its Homer in the Massachusetts Brahmin William H. Prescott, whose *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) remains unchallengeable as a classic of nineteenth-century American historical prose, its only rival the frontier histories of Francis Parkman.

The Aztecs, Prescott wrote, were a "barbaric empire" whose fall "we cannot regret":

> The Aztecs not only did not advance the condition of their vassals, they did much to degrade it. How can a nation where human sacrifices prevail, and especially when combined with cannibalism, further the march of civilization? . . . The heart was hardened, the manners were made ferocious, the feeble light of civilization, transmitted from milder race, was growing fainter and fainter as thousands and thousands of miserable victims, throughout the empire, were yearly fattened in its cages, sacrificed on its altars, dressed and served at its banquets! The whole land was converted into a vast human shambles! The empire of the Aztecs did not fall before its time.

Moreover the doom of the Aztecs had for Prescott a very Enlightenment—and specifically an abolitionist—lesson:

> Its fate may serve as a striking proof, that a government which does not rest on the sympathies of its subjects cannot long abide; that human institutions, when not connected with human prosperity and progress, must fall—if not before the increasing light of civilization, by the hand of violence, by violence from within, if not from without. And who shall lament their fall?

As for the "Old Conquerors," Prescott can be severe on their occasional "cruel deeds"—"Let them lie heavy on their heads. They were an iron race, who periled life and fortune in the cause and, as they made little account of danger and suffering to themselves, they had little sympathy to spare for their unfortunate enemies"—but he finds that on the whole and for their times these Conquerors operated on "principles less revolting to humanity" than many another up to Prescott's own day. The "moral view" aside, their military achievement was "too startling for the probabilities demanded by fiction, and without a parallel in the pages of history."

Prescott married, as it were, the crusading fervor associated with the Beecher family to the narrative excitement of Virgil or Walter Scott. Written with a now-dated Ciceronean magniloquence, it was a noble performance, all the more so since Prescott was all but blind in the left eye as a result of a food fight in his junior year at Harvard and was never to visit either Spain or Mexico.

It is certainly time for a new account of these events to be addressed to the intelligent general reader. Indeed, one might expect such an account, in today's climate of Europhobia, simply to reverse the Prescott value-batteries and light up: Aztec=good; Cortes=bad. The good news is that the job has been done by Hugh Thomas, the superb English narrative writer whose *The Spanish Civil War* back in 1961 showed his stripes: learning, eloquence, a compassionate liberalism leaning to anticlericalism but eager to be fair. "Today," he declares in the preface to his new book, "we are all, as it were, Gibbonians. Different modes of worship seem to most of us as equally true, to our philosophers as equally false, and to our anthropologists as equally interesting." The Aztecs—or Mexica, as he calls them—may thus be assured an impartial hearer in Thomas.

The Cortes-Montezuma story, so dramatic that it seems to tell itself, actually demands high narrative gifts. Like Prescott, Thomas begins with a survey of the Mexican civilization: its recent date, its ruthless empire, its arts, its architecture, its island capital of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) reached by causeways into a huge lake, its high-strung monarch Montezuma. They had a richly rhetorical language, Nahuatl, but no real phonetic writing, unlike the earlier (and more interesting) Maya in the south. Above all there was the oppressive, ubiquitous religion, with thousands of temples and priests and gods, most remarkable among the last being the light-skinned, bearded Prometheus/Akhenaton figure of Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent, mysteriously exiled and due for a return; and the sun god/war god Huitzilopochtli, the hummingbird, whose morning ascent into the sky had to be guaranteed—daily—by human blood. The huge pyramids were known as Huitzilopochtli's dining tables. Captives, or select locals, not excluding women and children, were led "voluntarily" to the top, their hearts (euphemistically called "eagle cactus fruits") extracted, their limbs eaten with chocolate or chili by priests and court officials, their entrails tossed to the beasts in the imperial zoo, while the public gawked. By the time of Montezuma, the sun god was demanding a couple of hundred cactus fruits a day. Their subject peoples, who covered most of central Mexico, did not love the Mexica.

Unlike Prescott, Thomas gives a vivid and plausible picture of the Castile that bore Cortes, the son of a marginal, but noble, mercenary in the wild, bellicose, hard province of Extremadura. It was the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, just reaching nationhood after the Moorish Reconquest and not

Donald Lyons is the author of the new book, Independent Visions: A Critical Introduction to Recent Independent American Film *(Ballantine).*

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inclined to multiculturalist tolerance. Henry VIII was on the English throne. Cervantes—and Shakespeare—were a half-century away, but the Italian Renaissance was in full swing. Machiavelli was writing *The Prince* in the 1510s. Born in 1484, Cortes got out of Extremadura quickly and scrambled himself some education in the university town of Salamanca; hungry for fame and inspired, perhaps, by thoughts of emulating Julius Caesar and El Cid, he thought of going to fight for the Borgias in Italy but instead shipped off to Hispaniola in 1506. His genius was his own, but Cortes's will, his appetite for the world, was very recognizably that of a young man of dubious social position in a turbulent but expanding land. In Hispaniola, he served the lazy, vain governor, Diego Velazquez, who, after sending out two timorous, inconclusive expeditions to the Yucatan in 1517 and 1518, tried a third with Cortes in charge. Cortes sailed from Cuba on February 18, 1519, with 530 troops, eleven ships, sixteen horses, many dogs, an array of cannon and crossbows and arquebuses, and armloads of glass beads and mirrors. He was driven, Thomas concludes, by a heady mix of Christian zeal and Castilian honor.

Founding Vera Cruz on the Mexican coast, Cortes befriended the pleasant, sexually easygoing Totonacs and easily won them from allegiance to the puritanical (and hungry) Mexica. Hearing more and more about the inland Empire and clashing successfully a few times with their haughty tax collectors, Cortes began to concoct a "wild scheme . . . straight from the pages" of a romance: march on it. He had his ships disabled to forestall mutiny and made a stirring imperialist speech to the troops (I do not say to the "men" for there were a few women warriors along, as well as an all-important native woman interpreter). He would "in some as yet unrevealed way . . . through diplomacy and courtesy . . . without a battle" conquer a great kingdom.

The long march, through unknown country marked by salt lakes, deserts, and volcanoes, got to the Mexican vassal state of Tlaxcala in September 1519. Hating the Mexica above all things, the Tlaxcalans became eager Castilian allies and Christian converts. The nearby city of Cholula resisted; there was a battle and an ugly massacre by Cortes' troops. This battle, like more serious later encounters with imperial forces, was essentially won by terror and dazzle: the natives, including the Mexica, were unfamiliar with such Castilian tricks as wheels, horses (particularly frightening, these), dogs, armor-plating, steel swords, and guns that killed at a distance. Then too, natives were loath to kill their opponents on the field, preferring to capture them live for later sacrifice—a distinct tactical disadvantage in combat.

Cortes's alliance with the Tlaxcalans, whom he had continually to restrain from lurid anti-Mexica atrocities, was key. Montezuma, who had prepared for the Spaniard's arrival mainly by doing astrology and eating sacred mushrooms, decided to welcome the invader—was he Quetzalcoatl returned?—in the heart of the inaccessible capital. The meeting, on November 8, was courteous, the Mexica being, according to Thomas, "well known [for] natural good manners." Montezuma used elaborate but empty formulas like "I bow to you" that Cortes was, with some disingenuousness, to interpret as declarations of feudal submission to the King of Spain. Montezuma, who prided himself on being a priest more than being emperor, politely took Cortes up the main Huitzilopochtli pyramid. Cortes, impressed by all the gold but revolted by braziers full of "still warm hearts," by blood-splashed walls, gore-drenched priests and necklaces of human heads, suggested cleaning the place up and dedicating it to the Virgin Mary. Monte-zuma was not amused.

Six days later, Cortes executed the master critical maneuver: he took Montezuma captive, removing the emperor bodily in a litter to the Castilian lodging, where Montezuma munched sweets and talked theology, an impotent and discredited figure.

In May 1520, Cortes had to go back to the coast to battle an expeditionary force the jealous Velazquez had sent to recall him. Cortes bested it easily, but had to rush back to Tenochtitlan to cope with a Mexican populace in violent uproar, ignited by a Castilian's slaughter of innocent celebrants of the flute-and-flower festival of the goddess of love. When Montezuma tried to quiet his own people, they stoned him to death.

Led by a more warlike brother of Montezuma, the Mexica drove the Conquistadors out of the city in July with a loss of some 600; it was *la noche triste* for the invaders. Now Cortes, his back to the wall, came up with his most brilliant stratagem to retake the city: he ordered built and portaged to Lake Mexico twelve flat-bottomed brigantines armed with cannon. These cannon, incidentally, were low on gunpowder until a bold Castilian volunteered to lower himself by a chain into the crater of the Popocatepetl volcano to collect sulphur. (How come Warner Brothers never made an Errol Flynn movie out of these events in the innocent 1930s?)

The wavering native allies were won back by such displays of recklessness, ruthlessness, energy, and charm. Thomas tut-tuts that these qualities may have blinded the allies to the Castilians' "intolerance," but is it not at least as likely that the allies were deliberately siding with the Castilians, warts and all, after long experience of the considerably nastier "intolerance" of the Huitzilopochtli worshippers?

Cortes's successful surprise attack on the lake began a long and terrible siege of the large lacustrine city. Block-by-block fighting grew in savagery and horror until the great and rich capital, Roman in its orderly grandeur, was gradually devastated. ("Tenochtitlan," Thomas writes, "was not an open city, nor were the conquistadors aesthetes or architectural historians.") Finally, a new emperor surrendered, this time for good.

The fall of Tenochtitlan—half tragic, half glorious, very much like the fall of Troy in the old epics—was the untoppable climax to the life of Cortes. There were other expeditions, in accord with his unresting "frontier spirit"; his wife died suspiciously after a domestic row about native mistresses; there was chilly ingratitude at home at the court of cold-fish young Emperor Charles V. Cortes died near Seville in 1547, at the age of 62, a valiant, charismatic conquistador who'd lived on, as many of that stamp do, into an age of bureaucrats in whom adventure had dwindled into mere greed and religious fervor into mere fanaticism. ❐

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A WOMAN'S PLACE: THE FRESHMEN WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE FACE OF CONGRESS

Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, with Barbara Feinman

Crown / 220 pages / $22.50

reviewed by FLORENCE KING

When a white male member of Congress jokingly referred to Rep. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky as "the three-M girl," the freshman legislatrix tasted gall and wormwood. His sobriquet was "inaccurate, demeaning, and pathetically behind the times," she fumes, ignoring his accurate M count. "I took pity on my out-of-touch colleague and pulled him aside to let him know it's time to thaw out, that the ice age is over. He still didn't get it."

MMM, a 51-year-old mother of eleven—his, hers, theirs, plus three legal wards—is the former NBC-TV journalist from suburban Philadelphia who went to Congress in the Year of the Woman and fell on Bill Clinton's sword on the Night of the Long Knives, when she cast the deciding affirmative vote on his budget. *A Woman's Place*, written with the aid of a former researcher for Woodward and Bernstein, is about breaking the barriers, overcoming the hurdles, finding her way, paying her dues, and what Pat Schroeder said to Leslie Byrne. Imagine *Junior Miss* recast for feminist policy wonks and you've got it.

The book begins with an introduction by Barbara Jordan in full Churchillian roll. This is followed by a foreword, which is followed by a prologue, and then we come at last to the first chapter and MMM's breathless description of how it all began:

> The morning after the election, I woke up and squinted at the morning sunlight streaming through the window, yawning at the new day. Then it all came back to me. Sitting up in bed, I blurted out, "Wow! I did it. I really did it. Now I'm going to have to serve." My husband, Ed, looked at me and smiled. Ed, a former congressman himself, had been there. (Ed was serving in Congress when we met; I interviewed him for a story and came home and called my mother. I knew he was the one, from the first time we met. "Mom," I said, "if he calls me, he's a goner." We were married within the year.)

In the Year of the Woman (1992), twenty-four new congresspersons were elected, making a total of forty-eight females in the House. MMM was wiped out by the swearing in. "Imagine, twenty-four women walking down the aisle, not to get married but to be sworn in to the United States Congress." The ceremony also drew raves from Karan English (D-Ariz.), who knows a legislative snuggery when she sees one. "When we were sworn in," she recalls, "there were a lot of kids on the floor. I thought it was a delight. It did sound like an elementary schoolyard. . . . There were kids coughing and crying and young voices and everybody was excited." Some of the (white male) old timers complained of the lack of decorum, but English brushed them off. "I thought, I couldn't be more proud of all this noise, because it represents all walks of life. Sure it was disruptive, but it was real life."

But working at Laws 'R' Us was not all bliss. The first thing MMM did was count the serpents in the garden. Of 190 statues and busts in the Capitol, only seven are of women. "Everywhere I turn, I see sculptures and paintings depicting white men," she complains. "When I eat in the members' dining room, I look up and what do I see? George Washington, the father of our country, surrounded by men, staring down at me."

And then there's the cloakroom, where congressmen stretch out and take naps with their ties over their eyes. This, says Karan English, proves that males and females have different "comfort levels." Women could never feel comfortable curling up on a couch and sleeping in public. "We don't have enough power to do it. If we're asleep, we seem, look, and are vulnerable."

MMM invokes Karan English so often that the book frequently takes on the flavor of the "my best girlfriend said" testimonials in *Cosmopolitan* magazine. They seem to have forged a mutual commiseration pact and turn to each other whenever a (white male) congressman is mean to them. "I was so flabbergasted about what he was saying to me," Karan told MMM. "I was just so amazed that he was attacking me personally, because no one does that. I could hardly believe it. I lost track. . . . My voice was weak and raspy and I was totally humiliated and embarrassed."

We also meet the recovering suicide, Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.), who "tried to end her own life, to stifle the pain, disappointment, and frustration that had somehow enveloped her and was squeezing the hope and strength out of her." Another member of the Class of '92, Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.), had been left destitute by the no-fault divorce that feminists demanded, with "a job that paid a pathetically inadequate salary . . . forced to rely on welfare and food stamps to feed her children. She had to sell her house and trade in her new station wagon for a very used Volkswagen Bug."

That is really good true-confessions writing, but most of the time MMM burbles with good cheer. Freshmen congresswomen are not only bright but "incredibly bright." Their husbands are not merely supportive but "wonderfully supportive." All problems are "real problems," seeing is "perceiving," and virtually every page contains an assertion that women of the nineties are "focused"—the word is her Rosebud.

She is not above lifting a cliché from Golda Meir. "When I was at work, I felt I should be at home; when I was at home, I felt I should be at work." Elizabeth Furse

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Florence King is a regular columnist for National Review. *Her first book,* Southern Ladies and Gentlemen, *published in 1975, has just been reissued in paperback by St. Martin's Press.*

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(D-Ore.) lifts hers from the first issue of *Ms.* magazine. "Oh my God, laundry! Are we supposed to do that? You mean that pile in the corner of the bedroom? It certainly would be nice to have a wife."

Leslie Byrne (D-Va.) shares with MMM her thoughts on the connection between team sports and the uses of power: "Men, as little boys, get it woven into their very fabric; it seeps into their inchoate bones."

Lynn Woolsey analyzes the feminine penchant for detail: "Men are more broad-brushed, so they can go into these committee meetings and maybe they just soak it up, and they get it or it doesn't matter that they're just swishing through."

Jennifer Dunn (R-Wash.) laments: "Women often aren't taken very seriously. Maybe it's because of their speaking style." Yep, maybe it is.

MMM's chapter on The Vote is disappointingly—and suspiciously—skimpy. She caved so quickly that something else must have been said that she's not telling. All she says is that when the ayes reached 217 of the 218 needed for passage, Clinton, his voice sounding "drained and tired," phoned her and asked simply, "What would it take, Marjorie?"

When she demurred, he revved up his tone of exhausted self-pity and floored the guilt pedal. "Without your vote, I can't win. I think my administration will grind to a halt without the passage of this budget. The entire rest of our agenda depends on getting this behind us. What would it take?"

"It would really take an entitlements conference," she chirruped. That is just what she got, along with a lot of flak from her constituents. But that's okay. She says she couldn't live with herself if she "let him go down in flames, let him be cut off at the knees." And besides, the future of her children and all of America's children was at stake—the epilogue is entitled "Our Legacy to Our Children."

There also was supposed to be a postscript, but evidently it wasn't ready in time for inclusion in the reviewer's reading copy—and is missing from the hardbound copy as well. Also missing from the final copy is the "Interview with Hillary Rodham Clinton" advertised on the book jacket. It may be that for once in her life, HRC is mad at a woman who played hard to get with Bill. ❐

THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA

H.J.A. Sire

Yale University Press / 305 pages / $45

reviewed by FRANCIS X. ROCCA

Who takes *noblesse oblige* seriously anymore? The left, as ever, considers it a charade to distract the oppressed from fundamental inequities in society. The right, with George Bush painfully fresh in mind, sees it as a fancy term for Republican me-too-ism. Neoconservatives find the implicit social and ethnic elitism repugnant. Liberals may hint at it, when invoking Roosevelts or Kennedys, but they never speak the words—perhaps because everyone knows by now that when politicians acquire *noblesse*, it's taxpayers who take on the *oblige*.

There are still at least 10,000 people for whom n.o. is not only a nice idea but a principle of action. Members of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, have been caring for the poor and the sick since the eleventh century, when the Blessed Gerard founded a hospice for pilgrims to the Holy Land. Nowadays the Knights of Malta bring relief to the distressed everywhere from the Amazon to Vietnam. Each May they sponsor a virtual Woodstock of n.o. at Lourdes: Dames in caped nurse's uniforms emblazoned with the eight-pointed cross, Knights in plain dark suits, thousands of them wheeling around the ill to Mass and prayer.

They take their nobility as seriously as their obligations. Knights of Justice, the only ones eligible to sit on the Sovereign Council, must show sixteen quarters of nobility; i.e., all their great-grandparents must have had coats of arms. Famous members such as Peter Grace, Alexander Haig, William Simon, and William F. Buckley, Jr. are mere Knights of Magistral Grace, "whose nobility consists only in their knighthood itself." This lowest rank now comprises a majority of the members in many National Associations, especially outside of Europe; these members raise most of the money for charity. Nevertheless, to those who would turn the Knights entirely into an order of merit, H.J.A. Sire urges caution. Association with the rich and powerful can draw the wrong sort of attention and the wrong sort of people: witness the Italian financier, a Knight of Magistral Grace, implicated in both the P2 Lodge and Banco Ambrosiano scandals of the 1980s. Of course, the Order's history is also marked by the perfidy of the pedigreed, but the aptly named Sire maintains that aristocracy is a unique source of "energy and *esprit de corps*."

In an age of universal tolerance and pervasive boredom, something like a risqué thrill can be produced by contradicting the notion that all men are created equal. *The Knights of Malta* provides a taste of such reactionary pleasure, but the hauteur is generally too high-minded

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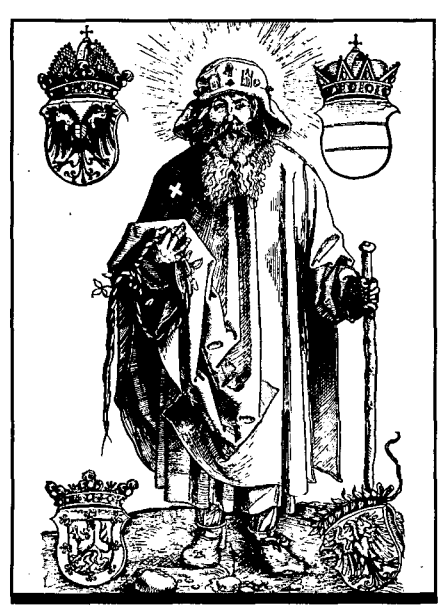

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for that. Nor, despite princely portraits, photographs of palaces, and descriptions of courtly splendor, does this book qualify as what Tom Wolfe calls "plutography." This would be morally commendable if it did not stem from a literary failing: the author is in so much of a hurry to cover the entire history that he never dwells on any anecdote or circumstance long enough to engage the reader's imagination. Thus the story of Prince Zizim, handed over by his rival sibling the Turkish Sultan and maintained by the Knights in gilded captivity, rates less attention than the administrative history of a French convent.

The Knights of Malta is not destined for the success of Caoursin's fifteenth-century history, whose romantic style and charming engravings (a few of them reproduced here) lured a generation of aristocratic youth to the Order. Sire's book, rather, belongs on the coffee table of every middle-aged Knight. It will be an ornament to that table, with full-color reproductions of paintings by Titian, Caravaggio, and Pinturrichio. There's something poignant about the photographs of medieval churches and ruined castles, at once massively solid and soaringly graceful. The text on the other hand is merely solid, and will prove an ordeal for even the most devoted readers. In its stultifying central section, which treats the Order's European divisions country by country, one encounters a somewhat more exotic and better dressed cousin of *The History of the Minneapolis University Club.*

Yet what a club. Even in Sire's pedestrian telling, the Knights' great accomplishments, especially those on the battlefield, command our awe. By holding off a Turkish siege of Rhodes in 1480, they thwarted the Sultan's plan to invade Italy. Their intransigence at Malta nearly a century later earned the gratitude and admiration of all Christendom. Along with accounts of intrigue in papal and royal courts, the most absorbing passages here are tales of battle. The extensive descriptions of fortifications, accompanied by diagrams and photographs, will be rougher going for all except aficionados of military engineering, who won't have to look up "ravelin," "barbican," or "talus."

The Knight as warrior, like so much else of the pre-modern world, was a casualty of the French Revolution. In 1798 Napoleon evicted the Order from Malta, its last sovereign territory, and afterwards anything but peaceable activity was unfeasible.[1] The Order now enjoys diplomatic recognition from more than sixty countries, a courtesy that facilitates relief work.

Today, fighting and healing seem incongruous missions, even incompatible ones. But this is because we have forgotten the religious inspiration they had in common. "Crusade" is one of those religious terms—like "holocaust" or "epiphany"—that has been swamped by new, secular denotations. The crusaders believed that they were serving God by defending the true Faith. That the Knights, like the crusaders, often did well by doing good—e.g., their war on the Barbary corsairs involved the licensing of privateers, of whose spoils the Order enjoyed a share—does not argue against their sincerity. Men have never found it hard to reconcile profit with principle.

The soldierly vocation was not merely compatible with the curative, it followed naturally from it. The Order's first military activities were a kind of preventative medicine, guarding pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem from the Levantine coast. And from early on, official writings describe the Order's charitable work in chivalric terms: as service to "our lords the poor" or "our lords the sick." Chivalry, Sire reminds us, meant bearing arms. "The Knights of St. John were not monks who fought but soldiers who took vows." They dedicated their craft to God just as the masons did who built the medieval cathedrals. It was only natural that they would then seek to give their craft wider scope—eventually the entire Mediterranean.

We're puzzled by the idea of a Military Hospitaller Order for the same reason that we are unable to appreciate n.o.: we've forgotten *its* religious inspiration, too. Sustained self-sacrifice is unimaginable without devotion to God, love for humanity per se being a notoriously inconstant passion; and though no church has a monopoly on solicitude for the needy, the Knight's sense of duty is quintessentially Christian. N.o. is not the virtue formulaically expressed as "giving something back," which suggests a bad conscience about what was taken away. (In that case, why not give it *all* back?) A better formula for n.o. is: "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

This is the farthest thing from egalitarianism. When the Knights ritually condescended to feed their patients in the hospital at Malta, they served aristocrats off of silver, the others off of pewter. Distinctions of rank will last until the Second Coming. "For ye have the poor always with you"—and the un-poor, too. The question is what the most serious distinctions will be based on. A system of privilege based on lineage and regulated by the Church is surely invidious and oppressive to many. But at least it affirms the importance of family, of continuity with the past and future, and of values that transcend the material world. Are stock holdings, vote counts, and LSAT scores truly preferable criteria for the assignment of society's highest esteem? ❐

[1] Or so goes the official story. In the mid-1980s there were oblique accusations of aid to the Nicaraguan contras. One wonders if there weren't at least a few Knights yearning to get back into the game.

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HOLE IN OUR SOUL: THE LOSS OF BEAUTY AND MEANING IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC

Martha Bayles

Free Press / 453 pages / $24.95

reviewed by M. D. CARNEGIE

"Today," the philosopher Theodor Adorno began his treatise on aesthetics, "it goes without saying that nothing about modern art goes without saying." Born just after the turn of the century, Adorno lived to see music, his first love, transformed from the twelve-tone compositions of Schönberg into the twelve-bar feedback of Jimi Hendrix—a development that has bewildered more than a few souls in the twentieth century.

Few commentators have essayed a serious study of popular music from a sympathetic perspective, not least because one usually needs to be under commentator age to feel the sympathy. Whatever else pop music may be "about," it is without question the soundtrack of youth; the idea of a 40-year-old happily singing along to the Ramones' "I Wanna Be Sedated" is unnerving at best. Only a young person could hear the good in most of it, just as only someone older could sense the danger; one need be well on the other side of an American childhood nowadays before realizing that getting stoned and listening to Pink Floyd is rather less than the optimal use of one's hours. By the time one attains commentator age, the subtler critical distinctions so close to the hearts of music fans—that Sting is a pompous blowhard but a wonderful songwriter, or that Digital Underground betrayed their enormous verbal gift by turning to gangsta rap—recede in importance.

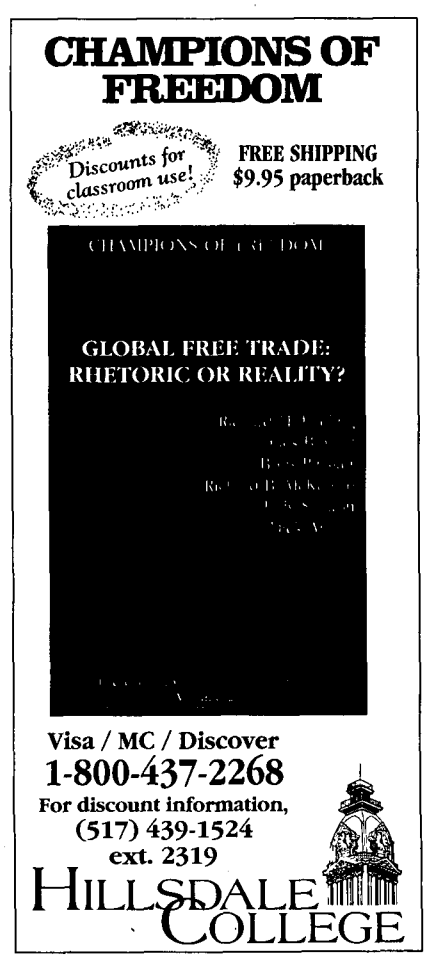
M. D. Carnegie writes for the Washington Post *and* New York Newsday, *among other publications.*

Far too much has been made of late concerning the stupor and stupidity of the loosely defined gaggle of twenty-somethings known as Generation X—to the upper end of which this reviewer arguably belongs. But upon reading Martha Bayles's *Hole in Our Soul*, one conclusion about that generation seems inescapable: they have a worldview so radically different from the generations before that they are largely inscrutable to their predecessors. Bayles's book is useful in that it will remind those tenacious enough to fight through its erudition of perhaps the most essential difference—that even the sixties generation, for all their revolt and rebellion, were still essentially people of faith. They attempted to substitute for their parents' belief in rectitude and hard work their own belief in a passel of freedoms, but they were believers nevertheless.

The latest generation operates largely in absence of motivating beliefs, and it is this want of faith that sets them apart. Their posture in the world is one of virtually total irony, a basic detachment from a society of the new and improved, the low-tar and the fat-free, the 30 percent more and the 40 percent less, the revolutionary new cleansing formulas and the exclusive, patented brush actions. In small doses, ironical detachment is as necessary for getting along in life as greed or love or any of the other human qualities. But this is a fully ironized generation, and, consequently, the news that Bayles has to tell us—that American popular music was once mostly beautiful and is now mostly tawdry—will elicit scarcely a jaded, cynical shrug of the shoulders.

Bayles has done a fine job in *Hole in Our Soul* of tracing the development of pop music; her analysis of the Afro-American musical tradition and its confrontation with European modernism is unparalleled in its comprehensiveness, if quirky in its reasoning. She understands jazz, and delineates its importance in the development of American popular music with a skill and intelligence hardly ever manifest in the writings of critics, journalists, or scholars. Her research is creditable, and there is much here to delight and infuriate both casual listeners and students of twentieth-century history. A more cogent summation of how pop music developed from the Delta blues to the Moody Blues is unlikely to appear for quite some time.

But both in her interpretations of individual performers and on the bigger point of the music's tremendous decline, Bayles is mostly at a loss after



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the 1960s—which, in her view, is when things began to go awry. This magazine is not the venue for a sustained defense of the soul stylings of Barry White, and few *TAS* readers will rue Bayles's woefully wrong readings of the work of Parliament/Funkadelic, the Sex Pistols, or Marvin Gaye. Pop music critics, one of the most venal and wretched sub-species of the human race, will lambaste her in due course for her misjudgments.

The larger mistake Bayles makes is in her cry for reform, her own generational belief transferred to the realm of popular music. Bayles clearly means for *Hole In Our Soul* to be a kind of call-to-arms, as if the violence, misogyny, crime, and general social pathology advocated in much of present-day pop music can be done away with simply because we recognize that it's destructive. "Censorship of popular culture is both a practical and a constitutional impossibility," she says, but only censorship will eradicate the elements of popular music against which she argues so passionately.

Why? First of all, the blues tradition upon which most pop is based is chock-a-block with violence and misogyny; such material is largely not new, Bayles's harrumphs notwithstanding. More importantly, to argue against the content in today's pop is to underestimate the depth of Generation X's cynicism and irony—and hence the music's tremendous appeal. Today's pop is without doubt thin, often soulless, musically bereft, angry and bitter, fundamentally asocial, and largely opposed to the cheeriness and positive inclinations of earlier music. But this nihilism and self-absorption compose the psychic skeleton of the generation, and no matter what its manifold shortcomings as art form, political medium, or cultural artifact, pop music surely does represent how a large segment of the population feels about its life and times. Blaming the music is only decapitating the messenger; young people listen to Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, recently dead by his own hand, because his words and music resonate with them, not because they need to be informed about their taste.

Indeed, taste is virtually all about which most young people in America *are* informed. In the main they cannot tell you how Congress works, or find the United States on a map, or offer convincing evidence they know who fought whom in World War II—but they can tell you loads about style and taste, especially in popular music. That taste, furthermore, is fundamentally opposed to the erudition that *Hole in Our Soul* evinces and advocates. Telling the youth of America that Prince is just a poor man's Little Richard won't work.

And much to the credit of youth: whatever is askew in American society today, it is not the fault of either the fourteen-year-olds or their music. The irony, cynicism, and unfeelingness of much of today's music is the expression of a worldview, not its cause; and though spending countless hours listening to exhortations to crime, undergirded by a savage beat, is without question bad for the kids, urging, as Bayles does, that pop music reincorporate styles and subjects now gone by the boards is futile. This generation is as hewn to its irony and pessimism as to its word processors and jumbo jets, and it is silly to expect popular music not to express those sentiments. If it is disturbing to hear millions of children singing along to songs bearing the most nihilistic and hopeless of messages, it is a good deal more unsettling to realize that they believe almost every word they're saying.

Popular music, for all Bayles's devoted attentions, can't suddenly be moored to notions of morality and conduct that have been discarded by the larger society. The grim truth about American life today is that so many, those in Generation X and those yet younger, do feel hopeless, cynical, and ironized past the point of redemption. There is no longer the widespread sense of possibility, a belief that animated so much of the populace even in the 1960s. This is a generation, by contrast, that doesn't hope, doesn't dream, doesn't care, and doesn't even know why. Whatever the solution to that might be, for sure it's not making better records. ❐

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DAVID BROCK
(continued from page 37)

Though there is no conflict issue for Watkins, the partnership is yet another sign of his ties. He is a partner with Hillary in Value Partners, an investment group that "sold short" on several health care stocks after the Clintons took office and Hillary began making policy pronouncements in the area of health care that may have driven down the value of the stocks she held. A potential conflict arose because the Clintons had not put their holdings into a blind trust until six months after taking office. According to his financial disclosure report, Watkins had assets in Value Partners valued between $100,000 and $250,000 in 1992.

Against this backdrop, Watkins's role in Travelgate is easier to understand.

VII.

On Wednesday morning, May 19, Watkins gave Dee Dee Myers written talking points on the travel office firings, which were to occur within the hour. "Those talking points described the dismissal as the result of a routine review conducted as part of the Vice President's National Performance Review," the White House Review said. This was a lie, part of the official line being fed to the press.

The talking points also disclosed the White House contacts with the FBI, just the thing the audit was designed to hide. (Watkins had apparently included it to justify the firings.) When Foster and Kennedy saw the talking points, they panicked and told Watkins to remove any mention of the FBI. But in a comedy of errors, neither Watkins nor Jeff Eller could find Myers in time: "When Watkins returned to her office before her press briefing, he learned that Myers, shortly after noon, had taken a press call and disclosed the FBI inquiry in response to a reporter's question." The specter of White House pressure for a criminal probe had thus been raised by the White House itself.

The audit cover-story now became all-important. Over the next two days, the FBI wrote four different press guidance statements that changed subtly to foster the misleading impression of a relationship between the audit and the investigation. On the afternoon of May 19, in response to many media inquiries, the FBI issued a one sentence statement:

> We understand that the results of the audit of the White House Travel Office will be referred to the FBI for our review.

The key change in a second statement issued by the FBI on May 20 was the presentation of the audit process—rather than the Cornelius allegations—as the predicate for the investigation:

> At the request of the White House, the FBI has had preliminary contact with the White House and the auditors brought in to audit the White House Travel Office. We anticipate receiving the final report of the auditors soon and will analyze their findings and conduct appropriate investigation. Beyond that, we are not in a position to comment.

In a third statement issued later that day, the FBI was dragged in a bit further. By now, it was apparently already "investigating":

> At the request of the White House, the FBI has had preliminary contact with the White House and the auditors brought in to audit the White House Travel Office. We anticipate receiving the final report of the auditors soon and will analyze their findings to determine the next steps in the investigation. Beyond that, we are not in a position to comment.

But this was still not enough to allay press suspicion that there was no basis for FBI involvement other than strong-arming by the White House. The White House needed not a simple statement of fact from the bureau but a substantive comment about the information coming to the FBI.

On Friday afternoon, John Collingwood, the chief spokesman for the FBI, was summoned to a White House meeting being convened by George Stephanopoulos with the administration's top guns: Nussbaum, Stephanopoulos, Foster, and Kennedy. The gang of four apparently pushed Collingwood to say that the FBI had determined grounds for a *criminal* investigation. "After Collingwood returned to the FBI, he updated his written press response to reflect his earlier oral press responses and the conversation in Stephanopoulos's office," according to the Review. He faxed the new press response to the White House, on the understanding it wouldn't be released. But that was not the end of White House shaping of the statement, the GAO revealed. "Ms. Myers said that after the FBI sent a press statement to the White House on May 21 'for guidance,' she asked Mr. Collingwood to make it clearer and 'consistent with the facts.'" The White House Review never acknowledged this final step, which resulted in this statement:

> At the request of the White House, the FBI has had preliminary contact with the White House and the auditors brought in to audit the White House Travel Office. That contact produced sufficient information for the FBI to determine that additional criminal investigation is warranted. We anticipate receiving the final report of the auditors soon and will analyze their findings to determine the next steps in the investigation. Beyond that, we are not in a position to comment.

A possible factor in this part of the scandal was FBI Director Sessions's struggle to keep his job. Collingwood had been especially close to Sessions, and it is plausible that in late May he was pliant in the face of White House demands on Travelgate to bolster Sessions's position. On May 13, when Kennedy and Foster were meeting with top FBI agents, newspapers reported that Attorney General Janet Reno had tentatively concluded that allegations of Sessions's misusing government employees for personal purposes were not serious enough to warrant dismissal. Was this a message to Sessions that he could hang on if he played ball on the travel office? On the very day that Collingwood was summoned to the White House, Sessions was in a face-to-face meeting with Reno at the Justice Department discussing his future. Reno said she would continue to review the accusations and had reached no decision.

By the last week of June, however, the White House had

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Ojars Kalnins

"A Reunion of Sorts . . ."

Reflections of an honored guest and past contributor on The American Spectator*'s annual Washington Club dinner.*

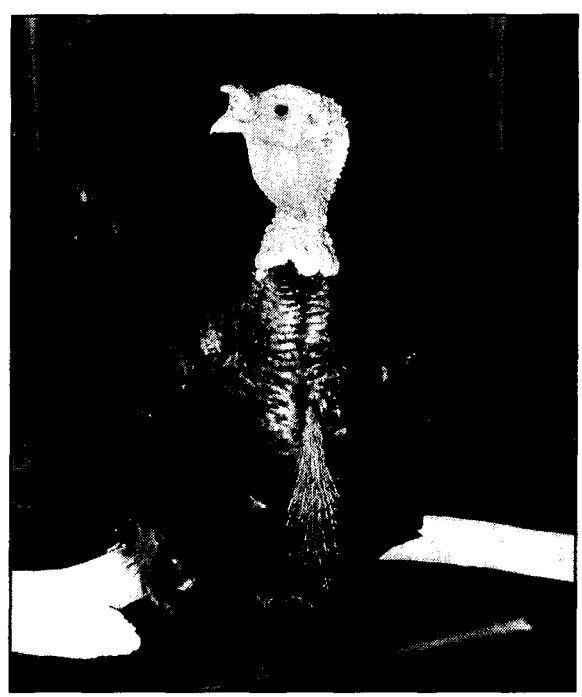
At *The American Spectator*'s annual dinner on March 7, I was asked by an old acquaintance whether I had done any writing lately. He knew me only as someone who had written a couple of articles about Latvia for the *Spectator* well over six years ago.

I had to think for a moment before giving a yes-and-no answer. Yes, I have been doing a lot of writing since then. No, not for the *Spectator* or any other publication. My writing these days consists of cables to the Latvian foreign ministry in Riga, diplomatic notes to the U.S. Department of State, and memos to editors correcting this or that fact in the latest story about Latvia.

Although I presume I was invited to the Washington Club dinner because Wlady Pleszczynski graciously remembered me as the guy who once wrote those obscure pieces about Latvia, I am not really a "writer" anymore. The Soviet-occupied Latvia that I wrote about in 1987 is now the independent Republic of Latvia, and I'm serving as its ambassador to the United States. So you could say that the *Spectator* and Latvia have both achieved a modicum of success.

Like many in Washington, I go to a lot of dinners—but this one was different. After seeing so many familiar inside-the-Beltway faces I had encountered over the last nine years, I couldn't decide whether I was a Washington insider or outsider. Or maybe both.

This was a reunion of sorts. Not many people were writing about Latvia back in 1987, and even fewer publications were publishing what little was being written. The *Spectator*, as usual, was an exception. When I first started reading it, I was an ad man in Chicago donating my free time to promote Latvian independence. The *Spectator* was an equally small opinion magazine in Bloomington, Indiana. Our outside-the-Beltway credentials were immaculate. We migrated to Washington for a similar reason: to better influence the influential—that is, to become more influential ourselves.



In April 1987, the *Spectator* published my article about a little known event called the 1986 U.S.-USSR Chautauqua Conference. I felt then that this event could be a turning point for Latvia. While reminiscing with others about it at the dinner, I realized it was a milestone in many lives. In what was touted as the first major test of Gorbachev's glasnost, a group of Reagan administration officials led 270 American citizens to a Latvian seaside resort to participate in "an exercise in open diplomacy." Although the Soviets planned to debate arms control, the Cold War, and other aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations, thanks to the insistence of the Latvian-American community and the support of the Reagan administration, the U.S. side also agreed to raise "the Baltic question." This annoyed the Soviets no end, especially since the proceedings were broadcast live throughout Latvia. There are many in Latvia today who believe that U.S. support during the conference was a catalyst for Latvia's awakening independence movement. Within a year the first massive pro-independence demonstrations anywhere in the Soviet Empire were occurring on the streets of Latvia. The rest is history.

As public-relations director of the American Latvian Association at the time, I not only participated in the conference (and got threatened by the KGB) but also got to meet a number of U.S. officials and

Ojars Kalnins is the Latvian ambassador to the United States.

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reporters who would play big roles in Latvia's future. The hero of the hour was Jack Matlock, then special adviser to the president on Soviet affairs and the highest-ranking U.S. official in the delegation. In his opening speech, Matlock spoke first in Latvian, as a gesture of respect for local national sensitivities. Switching to Russian, he told the Soviet apparatchiks that the U.S. "will never recognize the legality of the forcible incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia into the Soviet Union." It was a powerful one-two punch.

Matlock went on to become U.S. ambassador to the USSR and was an invaluable ally to the Latvian independence movement during the late 1980s. But Matlock wasn't the only U.S. member of the Chautauqua delegation to eventually move into the higher realms of diplomacy. Mark Palmer, who helped coordinate "the Baltic angle" at the conference, later became U.S. ambassador to Hungary. White House delegate Edward Djerejian is now U.S. ambassador to Israel. Special adviser Ints Silins, the only Latvian-born career diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service, became the first U.S. ambassador to Latvia in 1991. There was also one notable U.S. journalist who not only covered but also participated in the U.S.-Soviet debates on arms control during that fateful week in Latvia: Strobe Talbott.

Memories of the conference have woven through many meetings in later years. In September 1993, for example, when Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited Latvia, and three former "Chautauquans"—Talbott, Silins, and myself—took part in the meetings. Or when Latvia appointed Aivars Baumanis to serve as its ambassador to the United Nations. Aivars was a Latvian journalist reporting about, among other things, my activities during the Chautauqua conference. Five years later we were colleagues in the Latvian foreign service.

But there's more, and the *Spectator* seems to keep weaving in and out of it. During the Chautauqua conference I became friends with Amity Shlaes, who was covering the event for the *Wall Street Journal*. By coincidence, the *Spectator*

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Master of ceremonies Benjamin J. Stein

David Brock

Keynote speaker Sen. Richard Lugar

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that ran my piece on Chautauqua also ran a piece by Amity on Germany. Amity's name came up at the Washington Club dinner when my tablemate turned out to be Edward McFadden of *Reader's Digest*, a former *TAS* intern. We'd first met at a dinner in Amity's apartment in Brussels in 1990. Ed was posted at the *Journal*'s Brussels office, and I was passing through, on my way to a Latvian political conference in France. I guess this is what they mean by serendipitous networking.

I saw Ben Wattenberg at the Washington Club dinner as well. Ben had called me a week before to ask if I could provide some information on Latvia to a friend of his who wanted to visit there. Back in 1986, during a break between the debates at that very Chautauqua conference, I had helped him do some gift shopping in Riga.

After Jack Matlock, Ben was probably the most popular American in Latvia, largely because he was the most despised by the Soviets. Ben addressed the conference on the role of mass media in forming public opinion, and publicly challenged someone, anyone, among the Soviets in the audience to say one critical thing about the Soviet Union. After all, this was the beginning of glasnost. Ben was met with total silence. So he went out into the streets and did an informal public opinion poll of his own, which he later reported to the Soviet audience. "I have probably met half a dozen people here who objected to a Russian presence in Latvia." Ben explained that the Latvians had volunteered this view without prompting. Later, a Soviet publication described Wattenberg as "a typical representative of the sensationalist press more interested, not in heating up public opinion, but in manipulating and distorting it by lies."

Ben must have felt at home at the Washington Club dinner, for it seems like comparable charges have lately been hurled at the *Spectator*. We talked about Chautauqua and all the changes that have taken place in Latvia since then. He recalled how the Soviets had ridiculed him when he displayed a pin depicting the flag of independent Latvia. "Nobody remembers that here!" they laughed. Five years later the laugh was on them. ❐

Heather Richardson

Theodore Forstmann and Ricky Silberman

Arnaud de Borchgrave

Daniel Pipes and Danielle Pletka

Rachel Abrams and Mary Eberstadt

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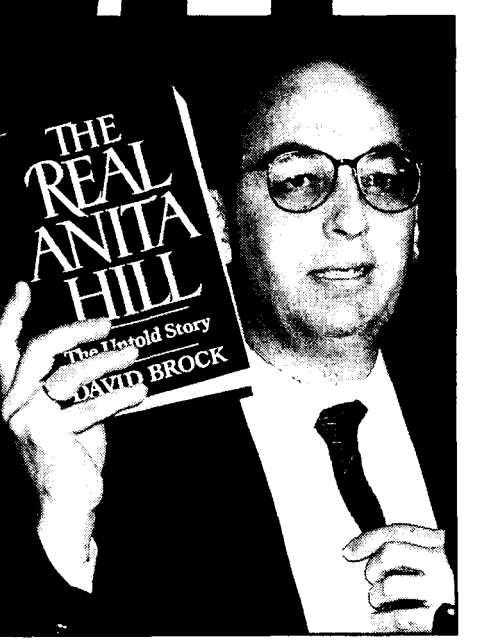
Richard Grenier, Ojars Kalnins, and Cynthia Grenier

Katy Tyrrell introduces her father

Ben Wattenberg and Robert Bork

Tod Lindberg, Christopher Caldwell, and Elliott Abrams



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Fred Barnes

Mary Jo Joyce and Richard M. Larry

My Hanh Burr

Frank Fahrenkopf

Free Expression Award winner Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr. with Ronald E. Burr and R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

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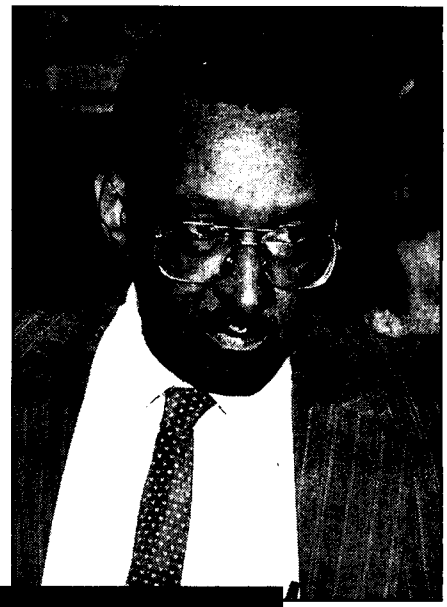
Benjamin J. Stein and mom Mildred Stein



Walter Williams

William Schulz and Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr.

Andrew Ferguson

David Brock and Catherine Campbell

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DAVID BROCK
(continued from page 71)

begun to examine a list of candidates to replace Sessions, and the director had been forced into discussions with the Justice Department on the timing of his resignation. Sessions wrote the letter to Dole June 28, flatly exposing the White House cover-up. Compare his statement with the FBI's White House–massaged May 21 statement above: "The FBI did not use the report of the auditors to make a determination that sufficient predication existed to conduct a criminal use the report of the auditors to make a determination that sufficient predication existed to conduct a criminal investigation. That determination was made on May 14 [by DOJ], one week before the FBI received a copy of the auditor's report."

The upshot was that after misusing the FBI once, the White House misused it again to deflect attention from the fact that Foster and Kennedy had politicized the criminal justice process. This became necessary when long-standing FBI policy against confirming or denying the existence of an investigation was violated by Myers, on Watkins's instructions. Once the words "criminal investigation" were extracted from the bureau, the White House released copies of the press guidance to reporters as an official press release from the FBI, again contravening FBI policy, which says a guidance is to be used only for oral briefings. The travel office workers were now publicly smeared as the targets of a criminal investigation.

VIII.

A second question of undue influence involves the possible abuse of the investigatory authority of the IRS. On May 21, the same day the White House released the FBI statement referring to a "criminal investigation," three IRS agents arrived unannounced at the offices of UltrAir in Smyrna, Tennessee. The agents had been dispatched from the Nashville IRS District Office to investigate allegations of bribery and kickbacks in connection with the White House charters and they produced an administrative summons for all of the company's financial records. Yet the IRS does not usually investigate such crimes unless there are tax implications, and in the case of UltrAir there was no tax return to trigger an audit.

An extensive examination of the issue by the authoritative publication *Tax Notes* concluded:

> Several former IRS executives called the visit highly unusual. In a normal audit, the IRS calls first, makes an appointment for an agent to visit, and requests documents that it needs to examine. Tactics such as unannounced visits and administrative summonses are usually reserved for cases when the taxpayer resists polite requests to provide information. . . .
>
> According to its president, Richard Millinor, UltrAir had no corporate existence before June 1992. . . . Ultra Air [had] yet to file an income tax return for calendar year 1992 [it had been granted an extension]. . . . The usual starting point for an IRS examination is a return; without a return, there is nothing for agents to talk about. . . . The IRS is not authorized to go on fishing expeditions for wrongdoing by government contractors. . . . Aggressive nonfiler procedures [used against UltrAir], in the sense of physically going after the nonfiler, are usually only invoked in criminal cases. Unannounced visits, euphemistically called "canvassing the district," and other coercive measures are standard operating procedure in organized crime and drug dealing cases, when ill-gotten income has not been reported and the earner is likely to flee. Nonfiler procedures cannot be invoked before a return is due, including extensions, unless the situation meets the requirements for a jeopardy assessment. . . . In UltrAir's case, the IRS did not go so far as to make a jeopardy assessment.

The publication noted that the travel office's use of large amounts of cash to pay bills, if received and unreported by UltrAir as required by law, may have raised eyebrows at the IRS. But it still would not have justified a "Kafkaesque" raid, *Tax Notes* concluded.

The question, then, is how the IRS was put onto UltrAir in the first place, and why they went after the company so fiercely.

In a letter dated July 14, 1993, GOP Rep. Frank Wolf posed several questions to the Office of the Inspector General of the Treasury Department, which oversees the IRS. This followed the release last June of a heavily redacted investigative report that the sinister agency produced itself—a useless two-inch stack of mostly blank paper with a single black line running diagonally across each page.

The Treasury IG released answers to Wolf's questions in April of this year. The IRS refused to release information on the questions of how the audit was initiated and whether it deviated from standard practice. As for undue influence on the IRS, Treasury concluded there was "no evidence that any IRS employee involved in this matter was influenced by anyone outside the IRS or within the Service."

There may well have been no direct influence, but that would not absolve the administration entirely. According to UltrAir officials, the IRS agents said the visit was prompted by newspaper articles that had raised allegations against the company. This may or may not be the full story of how the IRS got involved (IRS agents don't typically unilaterally decide to investigate based on newspaper accounts). But even if it is, troubling questions about administration involvement remain.

On Thursday, May 20, newspapers were filled with stories raising questions about UltrAir's practices; that day's *Wall Street Journal* carried especially detailed but unsubstantiated allegations about the company's practices and its relationship with the travel office, *attributed to White House officials*. By disclosing the FBI investigation on May 19, and leaking other details to the press, the White House at least indirectly—and improperly—put all of the law enforcement agencies of the U.S. government, including the IRS, on notice that there was a "problem" in the travel office and that the White House had a keen interest in the case.

In attempting to lay to rest Wolf's questions, moreover, the Treasury report actually raised another one: whether the investigation may have been improperly influenced by the White House after it was begun. The report contained this intriguing passage:

> In an interview conducted with GAO evaluators [GAO shared material with the IG], a National Office FBI official stated that *after reading newspaper articles* relevant to this matter regarding the IRS and a taxpayer, the FBI official contacted an IRS National Office Criminal

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> Investigator to obtain some investigative information, if applicable. The IRS Criminal Investigator did not provide the FBI official with any material information. . . . The National FBI Official then contacted a Nashville, Tennessee FBI agent and asked him to make an investigative inquiry with local IRS officials. The Nashville FBI agent spoke with four IRS Nashville employees: two Criminal Investigators, the Public Affairs Officer, and the District Disclosure Officer. Based on GAO's interviews with the FBI agents, and our interviews with the IRS employees, the Nashville FBI agent was not provided any material information concerning the taxpayer.

The implication is that the unnamed FBI official acted independently after learning of the IRS investigation in the newspapers. That may be so. What Treasury didn't disclose is that the agent also acted after numerous contacts with the White House and senior DOJ officials.

Congressional sources who were briefed by Treasury on the report say that the FBI agent referred to is supervisory agent Tom Carl—the agent who had been told by Kennedy of high-level White House interest in the matter; who met with Kennedy, Foster, Watkins, and Cornelius at the White House; who then brought Cornelius's accusations to the Justice Department on May 14; and who met with Kennedy, Patsy Thomasson, and Larry Herman at the White House once more on May 15.

Note that Treasury says only that the IRS passed no "material" information on to the agent "regarding the taxpayer"; it says nothing about what the agent may have passed on to the IRS, nor does it rule out other information being passed on to the FBI. (A close examination of the redacted interviews released by the IRS last year shows that some of the IRS personnel said there was "no contact" by anyone outside the IRS regarding the UltrAir audit—but others used the term "no influence," indicating, perhaps, that there *was* contact.)

IX.

By this time, naturally, the White House intervention had aroused so much suspicion in the press that the original goal of firing the travel office employees to make room for Cornelius & Co. had to quickly be abandoned. Cornelius had never really taken control of the office before the plan blew up in her face. At Watkins's instruction, World Wide moved into the White House on May 19, the day of the firings, but the agency's representatives were tossed out two days later. An interim contract to handle the White House business was awarded to American Express.

Also on the day of the firings, Darnell Martens, who now had White House access, called Penny Sample and told her she could begin arranging charters for upcoming presidential trips on a volunteer basis. On whose authority Martens made this rather spectacular offer of a White House job to his girlfriend is not known. Sample arrived for work at the White House on May 20, and arranged one charter before she was told on June 1 to leave. In the few days she was on the job, Sample managed to get in hot water. Though supposedly a volunteer, she diverted a $1,400 commission to her charter firm on the first flight she arranged. The White House later said this was a "mistake," and the money was repaid.

The White House also had to backtrack on the seven firings. Director Billy Dale, who had a sterling reputation with the press corps in his thirty-one years in the travel office, and the assistant director, Gary Wright, filed for retirement. The more serious charges of kickbacks and embezzlement were not backed up in the Review, which found only some poor record keeping and clerical errors. For example, there was no record in the office's petty cash ledger for $18,000 worth of checks written to cash over a 17-month period. The press corps was often billed for trips by estimate, with no later reconciliation, though media organizations were not known to complain about the arrangement. "What you had was sloppy accounting," said one person familiar with the operations of the office. "They had to do things like take a plane load of White House correspondents through ten countries in ten days. They laid out lots of cash to get reporters where they needed to go, including tipping for them. There was some poor record keeping, but I'd be very surprised if there was anything else."

As for the other five workers, the White House Review concluded that the charges against them were baseless; thus, not only were their rights trampled as accusations against them were publicized with no opportunity to respond, but the charges turned out to be *false*. The five were quickly re-hired by other government agencies and informed that they were not targets of any criminal investigation, and McLarty apologized for "insensitive" treatment.

Though hailed in the press as remarkably self-critical, the White House Review, headed by McLarty and OMB Director Leon Panetta, also found no wrongdoing by the White House or Thomason or Martens, only "mistakes," "inappropriate" actions, and unfortunate "appearances." Actions of senior White House staff were described as "mistakes in judgment, mistakes of inexperience."

When discussing the statements made by Kennedy to the FBI, the report said "such comments should not have been made. Comments like these risk creating the perception that the FBI is being improperly pressured." Kennedy's reference to the IRS "could have been interpreted as an ultimatum, even if that was not intended." Myers was "unwise" to trust Watkins's talking points. And "it was a mistake for the White House to publicly discuss FBI involvement." Summoning Collingwood to the White House to meet with Nussbaum, Stephanopoulos, Foster, and Kennedy was a "mistake" also. No one in the White House was fired or even seriously disciplined—though the tacky Thomasons seem to have been banished.

But what else could really be expected from a review honchoed by McLarty, who was reviewing his own conduct? He had personally authorized the firings and the attempted cover-up. Congressional sources say the Review was actually conducted for the most part by John Podesta, an assistant to the president, who is now, quite appropriately, chairing the daily Whitewater damage-control sessions in the White House.

X.

To minimize the impact of the disclosures, the report was released late in the afternoon of Friday, July 2. Advance copies of the report were not available. The White House permitted live television coverage only of the opening statements of McLarty, Panetta, and other officials; the rather hostile ques-

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tion-and-answer session that followed was yanked off the air.

One of the more glaring deficiencies in the report was that none of the seven travel office employees was interviewed. The stated reason for this omission was that the FBI and the Justice Department were conducting an investigation of the travel office and the White House interviews might interfere. Then–deputy attorney general Philip Heymann wrote a letter to Podesta advising him not to interview the seven, but the letter seemed to be an after-the-fact measure to blunt criticism of a decision already made in the White House not to permit the fired employees to rebut the Peat Marwick audit. The Heymann letter was dated July 1, the day before the Review was released.

The woefully inadequate White House Review did not escape the notice of Republican members of Congress, particularly Senators Dole and Bond. The headlines of mid-July were filled with GOP demands for congressional hearings and the appointment of a special counsel, the certain outcome had a Republican administration been caught in similar circumstances.

One cannot say with certainty where such inquiries would have led, but it is safe to say that Hillary Clinton, George Stephanopoulos, Bernard Nussbaum, Vince Foster, William Kennedy, David Watkins, Patsy Thomasson, Harry Thomason, and Darnell Martens, and senior officials in the FBI and the Justice Department, all would have been implicated. (Hillary, unlike the president, could be compelled to testify before Congress.)[6]

Indeed, it was during this period in July that Vince Foster went shopping for a Washington lawyer to represent him in what he believed would be inevitable congressional inquiries into the matter. GOP demands were taken quite seriously by the White House. In an attempt to head off hearings and a special counsel, Clinton had written on June 13 to Chairman Jack Brooks of the House Judiciary Committee, pledging a full and independent investigation of Travelgate by the Justice Department. Reno wrote to Brooks the next day pledging the same. Also on June 14, Dole called for a special counsel to investigate "this sorry episode of mistakes, misstatements and downright wrongdoing."

On July 20, scrutiny of the scandal began to intensify. Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee turned back a Republican attempt to force the president to furnish a raft of documents concerning potential misuse of the FBI in the travel office investigation. The House Republican Policy Committee adopted a statement calling for a special counsel on Travelgate:

> Who authorized or directed a Presidential counsel to summon FBI agents to the White House to seek an investigation of the travel office? Who authorized him to threaten the FBI with transferring the investigation to the IRS unless the agents took prompt action? In other words, how high up did this shocking politicization of law enforcement reach? Why was Hillary Clinton, and not the president, briefed on decisions involving the travel office?

And late that afternoon, the deputy White House counsel who was at the center of the Travelgate scandal, Vincent Foster, was found dead in Fort Marcy Park.

Foster's suicide choked off the congressional inquiry and completely quelled GOP demands for a special counsel. In effect, Foster's death saved the administration from further scrutiny. "The Hatch Act was on the floor and we were going to launch a broadside about the politicization of the FBI and abuse of power," said one GOP Senate aide. "But it would have revolved around Foster, and no one wanted to pee on his grave."

At the time of Foster's death, the media assumed that such a "minor" issue could not have possibly been a factor in the suicide. But the foregoing reconstruction should show that, in addition to other problems and worries that may have been weighing on his mind, Travelgate wasn't a minor issue for Foster after all: Foster had instructed Kennedy to call the FBI. Foster had personally met with FBI agents in the White House to spur an investigation. Foster had devised the plan to cover up this initial contact with a phony audit, and the plan failed. Foster had kept Hillary in the loop by instructing Watkins to keep her briefed. Foster had told Watkins to doctor the White House media talking points, only to have Dee Dee Myers spill the beans accidentally. And drawing in his boss Bernard Nussbaum, Foster had summoned the FBI to the White House to shape the bureau's press guidance on the investigation.

The torn-up note the White House alleges it discovered in Foster's briefcase several days after the initial search of his office—a photocopy of which was publicly released only after a 48-hour delay—mentions Travelgate specifically in five of eleven lines. (It does not mention Whitewater at all.) "No one in the White House, to my knowledge, violated any law or standard of conduct, including any action in the travel office. There was no intent to benefit any individual or specific group," Foster wrote.

"The FBI lied in their report to the AG," the note continued, an apparent reference to Sessions's version of events. The note also said "the press is covering up the illegal benefits they received from the travel staff," and "the GOP has lied and misrepresented its knowledge and role and covered up a prior investigation."[7] A sixth line, "the public will never believe the innocence of the Clintons and their loyal staff," could very well have been another reference to Travelgate.

With Foster's death, Hillary's iron triangle began to crumble. Eventually, Nussbaum and Hubbell would be bounced out of the administration, and Kennedy would be hobbled. But Travelgate remained covered up. The GOP settled for a GAO report, which was released in early May to a universal yawn in the media.

Though it added a few essential facts to the mix, the GAO's conclusions did not track with even its own factual

[6] None of the implicated players consented to be interviewed for this article, despite repeated oral and written requests. Before answering or even seeing any written questions, Thomason's lawyer Bennett responded with a hand-delivered letter containing a preemptive libel threat.

[7] This seems to be a reference to a review of the travel office conducted in the early months of the Reagan administration by the man who then held Watkins's position. That review found sloppy bookkeeping as well, but no wrongdoing. The then-director retired and Billy Dale was promoted. No other employees were adversely affected.

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findings. In accepting McLarty's transparently false statement that "on the basis of KPMG's findings, he had approved the removal of the employees," the GAO falsified the history of the affair to comport with the White House cover story. The manipulations of Thomason, Martens, and Cornelius were described in squishy language: they had "potential" personal and business interests and their actions "appeared to anticipate the removal of the employees." As for the travel office, the GAO found the same evidence of poor management as had KPMG—lack of documentation for the bidding process, ledger entries rather than vouchers for checks written to cash, and the like. The GAO found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing in the office. Despite the self-serving nature of the Cornelius allegations, the GAO concluded that the FBI had acted in accord with the attorney general's guidelines on criminal investigations, which require a "reasonable" indication of a federal crime before an investigation can be opened. The GAO also found the FBI's actions "consistent with normal procedures"—a laughable conclusion, considering the White House's highly unusual efforts to shape FBI press guidance. (As for the current travel operation, the GAO found that promised accounting and management procedures were not in place ten months after the firings.)

There is ample reason to question the objectivity of the GAO's findings. The chief auditor, Nancy Kingsbury, may have knuckled under last year to White House pressure to soften an investigation of David Watkins and Patsy Thomasson for issuing retroactive pay increases and permitting double-dipping salary payments for White House staff. A draft report had concluded that the two officials did not have the authority to authorize the irregular payments, but the final report concluded the White House had not exceeded its authority.

According to Republican staffers in the House, Kingsbury betrayed a bias in briefings on the progress of the GAO travel audit this spring. In one meeting, Kingsbury huffed that the fired travel office employees "are better off" because five of them were given other jobs and the other two "enjoy full federal retirement and all of its benefits." Kingsbury said this was "a rather substantial mischaracterization of my remarks," but went on to essentially confirm the characterization. The staffers say that sections of the GAO report were circulating in draft before key White House officials were even interviewed. And the GAO did not appear anxious to interview the Travelgate Seven, none of whom were spoken to. According to a lawyer for one of the five exonerated employees, a GAO auditor called requesting an interview, and he was told to submit written questions. The GAO sent a list of questions but never followed up for the answers. Thomason and Martens refused to be interviewed.

Meanwhile, a criminal investigation of the travel office by the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section continues. According to sources familiar with it, the concentration appears to be on Billy Dale and Gary Wright. The far more disturbing aspects of the incident involving members of the Clinton administration and its political supporters may not be getting similar scrutiny, despite Clinton's and Reno's assurances to Congress.

Take, for example, the case of Harry Thomason. The principal federal conflict-of-interest law provides that "no office or employee" of the government may participate "personally and substantially" in a "particular matter" in which, to the individual's knowledge, he has a "financial interest." This bar extends to "special government employees" as well, defined by the statute as:

> an officer or employee of the executive or the legislative branch of the United States Government, or an independent agency . . . who is retained, designated, appointed, or employed to perform with or without compensation, for not to exceed one hundred and thirty days during any period of three hundred and sixty-five consecutive days, temporary duties either on a full time or intermittent basis.

The White House Review concluded that Thomason's involvement was "in no way motivated by a desire to enrich himself." But motivation is irrelevant. If Thomason's company, TRM, was seeking White House business, as the GAO concluded; if his activity involved a "particular matter" (such as advice on new charter arrangements); if he participated "personally and substantially" in events leading up to the firing of the travel office workers; and if he was in fact a special government employee, as his office, telephone service, and duties at the White House indicate, all the elements of the criminal statute would have been met.[8]

The conduct of Hillary Clinton also deserves serious review. Did she question the propriety of Thomason's actions? Did she take actions on Thomason's behalf? What was her knowledge of White House staff contact with the FBI? Did she participate in the guidance on White House–Justice Department contacts that was revised to include Hubbell?

The Justice investigation has been open for an extraordinarily long time. By comparison, allegations raised about Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, involving a tangled web of international financial transactions, were dismissed in a few months. The Justice Department may have become a bottomless hole into which such politically sensitive matters as Travelgate are thrown, so that the administration can hide behind perennially "ongoing investigations." Some insiders speculate that the investigation has been kept open so that subjects like Dale,

(continued on page 94)

[8] The GAO concluded that Thomason was not a special government employee under the conflict-of-interest laws. The terms "officer" and "employee" are not defined in those laws. The agency reached its conclusion by contending that Thomason did not meet the three criteria required if an individual is to have the legal status of a federal officer or employee under the definition of those terms in title 5 of the civil service laws. But the Justice Department and the Office of Government Ethics have acknowledged that those criteria are merely a guide; they are not definitive. Both Justice and OGE have applied a functional test in determining special government employee status in the past, and the descriptions of Thomason's activities at the White House—attending meetings, reviewing employees' performance—appear to meet that test.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 10)

dead. Even then, it wasn't the efforts of my government that brought him home. It was Christmas. The Vietnamese always returned a few "for the holidays."

There is nothing I can do for those left behind in Nam. I believe there are men still being held, but worse yet is the belief that those in control will never do anything about it.

I wonder if our government will ever let it happen again? I lost a husband to Vietnam. Could I lose my son, our son, to a future "police action"?

—Charleen Walters
Wife of Captain Donovan Walters
MIA December 21, 1972
Remains returned December 1988
Weeping Water, Nebraska

I have read Mr. John Corry's recent article three times and am hard pressed to come up with any significant new or noncontroversial points. There may have been an American cover-up about MIAs in Vietnam, but that was at a time that few worried about the cost of getting out. (By the way, what is Mr. Corry's age? Did he do any on-site investigation in Vietnam?) We all share the sorrow of the families of MIAs and those killed in Vietnam and this article adds to this sorrow. The rhetoric about "healing" the wounds of these families, the veterans, and the country is not empty. Rather, it is time to heal the wounds and go on with our lives. This type of article should provide Mr. Corry with a lifetime of income. He can write next about MIAs in Korea and World War II. We left quite a few. (Where was he when we left Korea?) When he has exhausted these, he can write about the MIAs during our Civil War. There were a lot. This has the advantage that he can approach it from both the Southern and Northern side and cut down on travel expenses.

My last point concerns the beginning comment that "some may be alive today." This is the type of random shot that reopens the wounds of MIA families. In November 1992, four of us went back to Vietnam and traveled from Hanoi to Can Tho. One of the group was a former South Vietnamese paratrooper who talked with many former NVA and VC and asked very hard questions. No one believes that there is a living ex-military American left. Few Vietnamese learned Russian but they are all learning English. Open up the country and let in tourists, businessmen, MIA families, and veterans. Do not go in hostile (they did win the war) but as friends, and you can find out almost anything you want. Sorry, John, but if we have answers then you will have to write about Korea and it is a lot colder.

—Jack D. Welsh, M.D.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

I'm getting worried about you guys. You are becoming as obsessively loony as Oliver Stone on the subject of Bill Clinton, who is really not the Great Satan.

And now you devote a cover and five or six pages to a puerile farrago on the MIA mirage. Are you seriously suggesting that the Vietnamese are secreting dozens of by now fifty-something Americans in some bamboo gulag, only letting them out occasionally to scrawl their names in the sand for passing helicopters to spot? Please!

War is a dirty business, and when an enemy is shot up or down the tendency is not to trek laboriously to the scene and collect all salient information for the possible edification of next-of-kin at some far future date. We left the mountains of New Guinea littered with crashed planes from both sides; in Korea we ground the frozen bodies of enemy soldiers into the roadbeds rather than try to blast graves out of the frozen ground; in Vietnam we often bulldozed the night's bag anonymously into ditches. I suspect the other side did the same or worse.

Please get a grip on yourselves and get back to your essential role as literate spokesmen for common sense in the real world.

—Jim Becker
Honolulu, Hawaii

"The MIA Cover-Up" by John Corry was one of the best articles on the issue to date. Unfortunately, most Americans have no idea to what extent the government has gone to close the outstanding cases. A good example is the handling of the case of Capt. Harley Hall, former Wing Commander of the Blue Angels 1970-71. Capt. Hall was shot down on January 27, 1973, and, according to government records seen by his wife Mary Lou Hall, placed in what we now know was a second-tier prison system for special prisoners where he was interrogated by the Russians. Although the Navy first notified Mrs. Hall of his missing status, within a month his status was changed to confirmed captured. Thus, according to the government's own records, the Vietnamese have a body either living or dead that they should have to account for. Instead of demanding his remains, the Department of Defense is trying to get his wife to accept three teeth as his remains. . . . I hope *The American Spectator* will continue to cover this issue.

—Jane Trammell
Peachtree City, Georgia

Page 34 of the February issue was of particular interest for its reference to Air Force Captain Blair C. Wrye, an MIA.

I was well acquainted with Blair Wrye, while stationed at both Ellington Air Force Base and later at James Connally Air Force Base in Texas in the early 1950s. The last time I saw Blair Wrye was in January 1956, and at that time he was a B-25 flight instructor at Reese Air Force Base in Texas. One thing I know about Blair Wrye was that he was, and perhaps is, the quintessential survivor.

—Neal McCauley
Vacaville, California

John Corry replies:

While gathering material on MIAs, I was struck by how the people I interviewed could look at what seemed to be pertinent information—an intelligence report, a POW debriefing, even a newspaper story—and interpret it in such different ways. The determining factor was whether or not they had already made up their minds about the possibility of prisoners having been left behind in Southeast Asia. This was especially true of those who had rejected that possibility; it seemed to me they were unable or unwilling to consider anything that might undermine their position. I do not mean that as an insult, only as an observation. Let me respond now to the letter writers, with attention to my critics first.

Dr. Doolin points out my error in misidentifying Roger Shields. I regret having done so, although I must point out to Dr. Doolin that I did not criticize Shields, but instead cited him as something of a friendly witness. I must also note that there have been innumerable stories about "sleaze merchants preying on next-of-kin," and I saw no reason to repeat them. Meanwhile, I resist the notion that I insulted Melvin Laird and

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James Schlesinger. If Dr. Doolin will consult their testimony before the Senate committee on MIAs, he will find that they also think we left men behind in Southeast Asia.

Abraham Ellis notes that the United States failed to provide North Vietnam with financial aid. He is correct, and my story indicated that this led Vietnam to hold MIAs as hostages. Mr. Ellis, however, wants to prosecute Americans as war criminals. I think he has things backward.

Dr. Welsh says I failed to raise any "noncontroversial" points. I take this to mean he agrees that we left men behind in Vietnam, even though he did not find any when he went on tour there. Also, he asks about my age and wants to know where I was when we left Korea. I was in the army, long before, I suspect, he attended medical school.

Mr. Becker's view is his own; perhaps he and Dr. Welsh should talk.

Meanwhile, I thank those who wrote in support of my findings.

I share Mr. Dawson's admiration for the Marines. I can tell Mr. Warriner only that the Serex family was disappointed by the meeting with officials in Washington. I sympathize deeply with Mrs. Walters and all those who have had similar experiences, including Mary Lou Hall, whom Jane Trammell mentions in her thoughtful letter. I am glad to hear from Neil McCauley about Blair Wrye.

And finally, while it would be nice to conclude cheerfully, I cannot. In April, three Americans—former Congressman Billy Hendon; Beth Stewart, daughter of an MIA pilot, and Lamont Gaston, president of a veterans' organization—were expelled from Vietnam. They had tried to inspect the site where, according to recently declassified intelligence reports, MIAs once were held in an underground prison. That same week, the administration praised Vietnam for its "cooperation" in resolving the MIA issue. The cover-up continues.

Spielberg's Achievement

I must take exception to James Bowman's negative and unnecessarily glib review of *Schindler's List* ("Lost and Profound," *TAS*, February 1994). I found his analysis to be shallow, totally incomprehensible, and rather pseudo-intellectual. Endeavoring to understand the character of commandant Amon Goeth is an exercise in stupidity! Insanity has no driving motive other than the fire of its own malignancy. Perhaps if the "discerning" Mr. Bowman had ever taken the time to study the history of the other major players in the Third Reich, he might not be so mystified by what motivates the crazy Goeth.

In the same paragraph he is again puzzled by Schindler's "motiveless benignity." Unless I saw a different movie, I found this explained fairly simply early on in the film. The man wanted to make money! His motivation to begin with was certainly not altruistic in intent and I never felt the danger ever touched him unless it interfered with his hedonistic pursuits.

Finally, to compare Steven Spielberg to Oliver Stone is utterly absurd. While Stone has spent his career denigrating America at the expense of our servicemen, Spielberg has given us a huge amount of fluffy, funny fantasy—some of which I have enjoyed immensely.

—Ann L. Donily
Greeley, Colorado

James Bowman's remarks on Spielberg's *Schindler's List* strike me as sound, except for his faulting Spielberg for not supplying a motive for Schindler's risking his life to save Jews. Spielberg explicitly called the movie "a documentary"—i.e., a quasi-documentary—since he obviously couldn't document what had happened in the past and since he was basing his film on a "true fiction" (as it were) by a novelist. In such a case, it seems to me, the movie viewer uses his own moral imagination to speculate on motives, if he wishes, although, for me, it is impossible to know what moves a man brought up to believe that Jews were deicidal, backstabbing, anti-man agents of the devil, to risk his life to save as many of those Jews as he could. And any motive that Spielberg would have suggested would have been glib psychobabble or kindergarten psychology or a plausible lie, titillating many and offering a fresh stick for others to beat the Hollywood dog with. Isn't it enough that Spielberg showed that Schindler intended to save Jews, acted on his intentions, and succeeded?

Schindler was honored by Yad Vashem for his actions, not his motives. Spielberg, I think, has done the same, however inartistically.

—Bernard Adelman
Winthrop, Massachusetts

James Bowman replies:

I agree with Bernard Adelman that it would have been wrong of Spielberg glibly and speculatively to attribute motives to Schindler, but the point of my review was to answer his subsequent question—isn't it enough that he saved Jews?—in the negative. It is enough for the historical Schindler but not for this fictionalized version of him, who must not only save Jews but be convincing at the same time. Ann Donily did not see a different movie, she just didn't see the same one to the end if she thinks that Schindler can be explained by the desire to make money or to follow "hedonistic pursuits." It is also a cop-out to account for Amon Goeth by calling him insane. Would that it were so simple. But neither he nor thousands of other Nazi murderers suffered from any clinical condition known to psychiatry. They were ordinary people who did monstrous things. That is the true moral horror of the Holocaust. Why and how it happened remains a mystery that Spielberg should have explored but didn't—perhaps because his brain has been reduced to mush by all that "fluffy, funny fantasy."

Type-A Typo

What was my surprise to read, on p. 47 of the March *TAS*, JFK saying "I didn't think Diefenbach was a son of a bitch. I thought he was a prick," glossed by Victor Gold as "To friend Ben Bradlee, on Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbach." Canada never had a PM so named. The reference is surely to John George Diefenbaker (1855-1979), who was PM from 1957-63.

The page of Webster's New World whence I fetch those dates also yielded "dieffenbachia," any of various plants of a genus named after Ernst Dieffenbach, German naturalist (1811-55). And here a lucky cross-reference sends us to "dumb cane," also known as "mother-in-law plant" but more formally as the West Indian *Dieffenbachia sequine*, distinguished for yellow-blotched leaves that cause temporary speechlessness when chewed. Eureka! Those leaves belong in a presidential pouch at all times.

—Hugh Kenner
Athens, Georgia

Impaired Vision

The late Maurice Cranston's review of John Rawls's new book (*TAS*, January

(continued on page 91)

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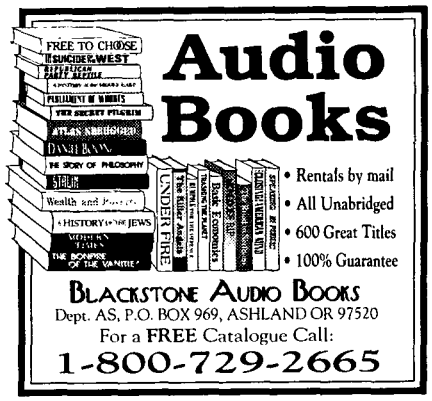

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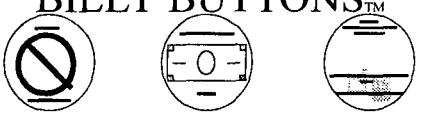

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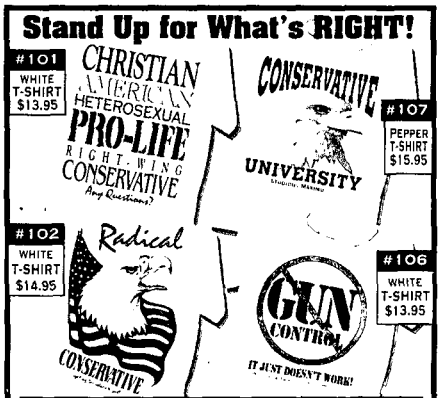

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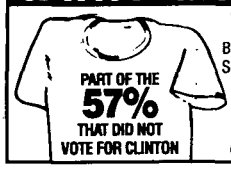

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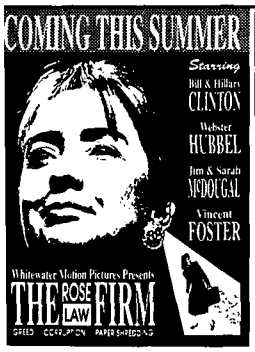

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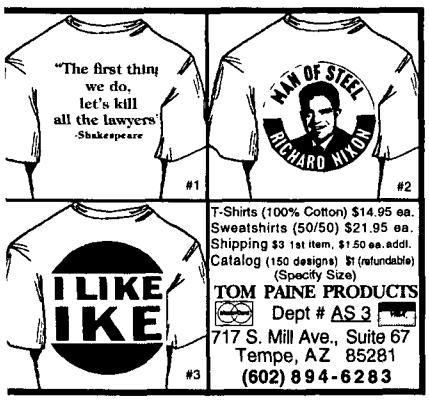

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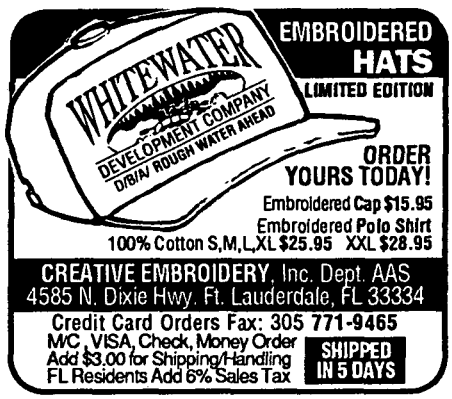

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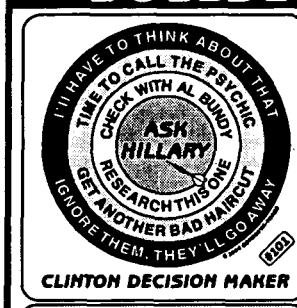

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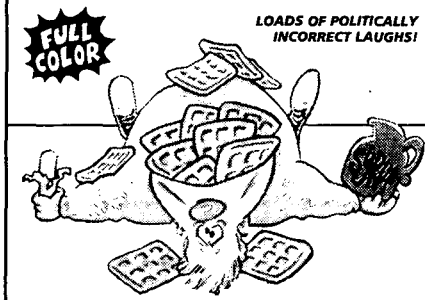

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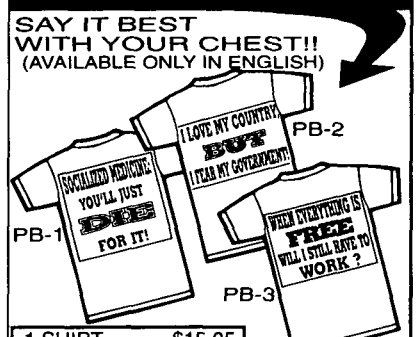
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CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 83)

1994) should ring in the ears of conservatives like a fireball in the night rather than any cause for celebration. Mr. Cranston has made it clear the liberals have a moral vision, in all its simplicity, where the state as the moral agent distributes fairness to its citizens.

Conservatives must create a moral vision based on personal responsibility but avoiding the nightmares of modern individualism, or else, the Clintons will push us off a cliff while we whimper, "But, Bill, we're the good guys."

—Thomas Simcox
Cresskill, New Jersey

Crying Wolfpack

I had trouble believing that it was, indeed, *The American Spectator* in which I read the Brock Yates review of Peter Golenbock's book on stock-car racing (*American Zoom*, *TAS*, February 1994). Yates criticized NASCAR for turning a rural pastime into a successful business, and criticized Golenbock for missing this "greed" aspect of the story. His criticism was out of line each time.

As to the first, NASCAR should be applauded and emulated for the tremendous success and growth it has experienced in the face of government attacks on the tobacco industry that supports it. Commercialism of the sport is a natural reaction to market forces. Stock car racing is a dynamic sport that evolves and adapts to meet spectator demand (as opposed to a static, never-changing sport such as baseball). Yates's contention that commercialism came at the expense of racing's "characters" is false. If true, it surely would have resulted in decreased attendance rates.

Rather than criticize Golenbock for writing a shallow book, Yates should have explained *why* the book is as it is. The reason, as Golenbock made clear in interviews, is that he wanted to repay the citizens of North Carolina by writing something positive about the state's sports, after his earlier book (*Personal Fouls*) about the NC State basketball team caused such disruption. *Personal Fouls* was filled with criticism of Wolfpack coach Jim Valvano for his supposed "greed" in capitalizing on his success. (Yates must have appreciated that.) Golenbock's unfounded and irresponsible allegations directly caused the destruction of NCSU basketball (which, of course, is the only sport that Carolinians revere as much as they do stock car racing). Some NCSU students still wear "Don't Be a Peter" T-shirts.

It was Golenbock's repentant side that ignored the issues of NASCAR money-making, apparently much to Yates' displeasure. Golenbock needn't have bothered. He has not been, and will not be, forgiven.

—Timothy R. Wyatt
Raleigh, North Carolina

NORQUIST

(continued from page 53)

"Put down that gun, and we'll talk"). Their pressure was unrelenting.

(4) Within ten days, Farris had sent out five faxes to his network, and his message went out repeatedly to all Christian radio stations, so that home-schoolers knew, hour by hour, the exact state of play.

(5) Home-schoolers were sophisticated enough to know what procedural votes were important, and didn't allow Congress to fool voters with meaningless votes that are canceled out by procedural motions.

Home schoolers had the home court advantage. They were defending a freedom they already enjoy. Dick Armey notes that it is always easier to get people to fight to protect a liberty than to acquire new freedoms. These were, Armey observes, "real people who saw their personal liberty at risk." They understood that "if we don't act in the next few days we'll be out of the home-schooling business."

Conservative activist Paul Weyrich, now a media maven with his own National Empowerment Television channel, reminds us that the Christian Right was created not in 1962 in response to the elimination of prayer in public school, not in 1973 with the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision legalizing abortion, but in 1978 with President Carter's assaults on Christian radio and threats against the tax status of Christian private schools.

Stay tuned: Farris is now examining the Clinton health care plan for its impact on home-schoolers, in particular Hillary Clinton, Donna Shalala, and Joycelyn Elders's insistence on school-based clinics dispensing health care independent of parental notification or approval. ❐

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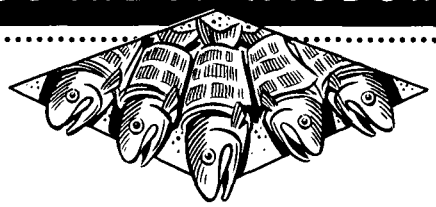

Rolling Stone

Three weeks after the death of a pop idol, hope springs eternal:

According to Nirvana's booker, it's still too early to determine whether Cobain will be well enough to participate in this summer's Lollapalooza tour, on which Nirvana is tentatively scheduled to perform.

[April 21, 1994]

Penthouse

The heirs to Edmund Burke and Billy Sunday get a condign intellectual pummeling from the sagacious Emily Prager, whose sophisticated thoughts appear monthly among the buttocks, bosoms, and armpits of *Penthouse*:

Late last year, the right-wing magazine *American Spectator* accused President Clinton of having six mistresses while he was governor, of engaging in steamy scenes with them in the back of cars in parking lots, of using troopers as personal valets (to arrange trysts, deliver gifts of lingerie, et cetera), and of calling these women over and over again. If conservatives thought these charges would be a turnoff to the women of America, they were sorely mistaken.

What conservatives fail to grasp, stuck as they are in their puritanical morality, is that Clinton is our second-sexiest president ever (Kennedy was, of course, the sexiest), and for women, that is *good*. Before we elected him, we knew that he'd had affairs, that his wife condoned them, and that, according to what his longtime mistress Gennifer Flowers told *Penthouse*, he adored performing oral sex on women. This last bit was of paramount importance because it explained several things to us, like why, perhaps, Mrs. Clinton put up with it—because she was getting good sex at home; why women were so drawn to him—because he enjoyed giving them pleasure. This is a feeling women did not get from Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, or Bush.

[April 1994]

Time

Historian Alan Brinkley makes another effort at enunciating the precise opposite of the truth:

Brinkley says Clinton is also a victim of a political fact of life: he's on the wrong side of the tolerance fence. "Liberals tend to value tolerance highly, so there's a greater reluctance to destroy enemies than among the right," he said.

[April 11, 1994]

Capitol Gang

Shocking ebullitions of a racist and highly judgmental nature:

SHIELDS: Al Hunt, hasn't it really been necessary, though, for the United States to show some resolve to the Serbs, the U.S. and its allies? I mean, otherwise, just you're turning everything over to them?

HUNT: Look, the Serbs are atrocious people.

[April 16, 1994]

Yale Daily News

How Guido Calabresi, dean of Yale Law School and Clinton nominee to the U.S. court of appeals, won the minds and hearts of his students, boys and girls alike:

Still, law students are more familiar with Calabresi's non-administrative side, especially his unabashed willingness to poke fun at himself.

Last year, students criticized Calabresi for issuing a memo in which he denounced as vulgar posters one student had displayed in the Law School depicting a penis. In the annual Law Revue comedy show later that year, Calabresi ran up on stage and donned a penis hat as he danced with the student impersonating him.

"Where else but Yale would you have a dean dance about on stage with a penis on his head?" Chandra asked. "People thought he was so great for doing that."

[April 20, 1994]

McLaughlin Group

The complicated wit of Eleanor Clift, FOB and closet foreign policy adviser:

MR. KONDRACKE: . . . Now, the problem here is that the president is not interested in foreign policy. He's far more interested in health care. And he has not, as in previous administrations, assigned [anyone] as chief foreign policy-maker in his administration. There is no John Foster Dulles. There is no Henry Kissinger in this administration.

MS. CLIFT: Thank God.

[April 15, 1994]

New York Times

The triumph of art as discoursed upon by the beauteous L. Daniella on the correspondence page of the esteemed *Times*, only a column or two away from such equally gifted literati as A. Lewis, F. Rich, and A. Quindlen:

"In a City of Graffiti, Gangs Turn to Violence to Protect Their Art" (news article, March 13) captures the exuberance young men experience as graffiti writers, or taggers, as those you describe in Los Angeles call themselves. Rather than identify and guide this energy, adults see graffiti only as a vandalism issue.

I have been a teen-age counselor for six years, mainly in New York City. I discovered that graffiti writers around the world are highly organized: they hold conventions, publish magazines and establish international reputations. For many, family, school and work are irrelevant, if not downright miserable, and don't come close to the brotherhood of graffiti in providing, believe it or not, a sense of respect and accomplishment.

Furthermore, writing graffiti is a better choice of activities than pure violence. Los Angeles has had a violent gang subculture for years; it's no surprise that graffiti writers carry weapons. By contrast, New York's graffiti subculture began from an urge to compete through art.

[March 24, 1994]

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Associated Press

An A.P. report on culture in Minneapolis, where art mixes with medicine and the gutter:

An art center warned that a show it was sponsoring incorporated "erotic torture" and used medical devices and bondage and discipline techniques.

But one audience member said he was not prepared to see one performer cut another, mop up the blood with towels and send them soaring above the audience on revolving clotheslines.

"I had no idea what I was in for," said Jim Berenson, a Twin Cities sculptor who called health officials to ask whether spectators were at risk of contracting the AIDS virus if blood had dripped on them during the March 5 performance.

[March 25, 1994]

Chicago Tribune

Carol Kleiman, in her celebrated "Women at Work" column, yet again advances the surprising proposition that men and women are not equal:

Sociologist Mary Frances Stuck of the State University of New York at Oswego has found that women "tend to think of computers as productivity tools," to be used only to get the job done.

Women reportedly believe that using networking systems at work may be a waste of valuable time; at home, women often are too tired or too busy with household responsibilities to enjoy the luxury of "playing" with the computer.

Men, on the other hand, "tend to look at computers as things to be explored . . . as toys," Stuck says. They see computers as a challenge to be conquered.

There's another problem, too. Some women report being sexually harassed on mainstream on-line systems. That's why, I believe, 90 percent of the 700 subscribers to Women's Wire of San Francisco are female—and unharassed.

Overall, despite the fact that twice as many women as men work at desktop computers, men are much more active on-line users.

Stuck doesn't mention another factor that makes women reject computer services: Much of the terminology of computer technology was invented by men to appeal to men.

But women pay a price for being turned off by terms such as "hardware" and "software" or by systems described as being "up" or "down."

[March 24, 1994]

Blackbirch Press

Preview of a young people's biography of two unindicted co-conspirators:

BILL & HILLARY
Working Together in the White House

Keith Elliott Greenberg

Lavishly illustrated with many large, full-color illustrations

As this book traces Bill and Hillary Clinton's lives together as students, lawyers, parents, and public figures, it illuminates the serious commitment they share: making life better in the U.S. and throughout the world. It describes how Hillary became one of the nation's top lawyers while she helped her husband succeed as the governor of Arkansas and then as the president. The book also chronicles Bill's appointment of Hillary to head a commission on education and later to chair a special committee on health care. Kids will learn about Bill and Hillary's shared views on raising their daughter, their mutual support in hard times, their defense of one another against the harshness of public life, and their communication about all the issues the president faces.

ages 7-10, 48 pages, $6.95

[Spring 1994]

Santa Cruz Sentinel

A California cat-lover begins to question authority, without losing her sense of humor:

Two stories in the front page of the March 23 *Sentinel* caught my eye: "Panhandling law passes," and "Cat-feeding ordinance passed by supervisors." I think that the county Board of Supervisors has unwittingly suggested a fresh approach to the issue of panhandling.

Let's think about the parallels. Santa Cruz County has a lot of stray cats. Downtown Santa Cruz has a lot of street people. The cats are "often sick and starving." So are the street people.

Therefore I offer a modest proposal. If you give handouts to a street person for more than 30 days, you would be required to register with the city as his or her legal guardian. You would be responsible for providing regular meals, vaccinations and screening for contagious diseases. If you were found to be maintaining an unregistered street person, you would be subject to a schedule of fines.

It would be your responsibility to trap your street person on a regular basis, and cut off the tips of his or her ears. You would have to have your street person spayed or neutered, unless you qualified for a $15 annual "unaltered street person certificate." To get the certificate, you would have to prove that you were providing proper housing, medical care and exercise for your street person.

I hope that my proposal will be taken in the humorous spirit in which it is offered.

—Caroline Whitelock
Capitola

[April 1994]

Washington Post

Addressing the Radio and Television Correspondents Association, Garrison Keillor reveals himself as essentially a Hegelian, with a strong leaning toward the Great Man of History theory:

I like this president. He's full of soul and he doesn't check out. I like him, even though I didn't go to his church. I'm a northern liberal, one of God's frozen people, and we northern liberals tend to be a stiff and sour bunch, who are in favor of humanity in principle but don't love anybody in particular. We're not comfortable with southern politicians. We associate warm climate with lack of intelligence—our way of justifying living where we do.

But I like this president, and I think the country does. I admire his love of politics, the pleasure he takes from being in crowds, looking at people, shaking hands, and his great love of talk. This president has been nothing but bold in bringing major divisive issues into the public forum and declaring himself on them.

In the same spiel, the federally subsidized Mr. Keillor rebukes Plato to declare an examined life not worth living:

It's a big country, and there is more to life than politics. Rush Limbaugh voted in a presidential election for the first time in his life in 1988, when he was 47 [sic] years old. I'm amazed by that fact. I guess it took him a while to figure out what he thought, and if I thought what he thought, I'd still be puzzled by it. It must be fun to say what Rush Limbaugh says, but imagine having to believe it and base your life on it.

[April 17, 1994]

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DAVID BROCK
(continued from page 81)

Wright, and Thomason would conveniently be unavailable for the GAO.

At the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section, where the investigation is being conducted, Joseph Gangloff is now the permanent deputy chief. According to the Sessions letter, Gangloff made the initial determination to open a criminal investigation based solely on Cornelius's representations, as relayed by the FBI's Tom Carl. The review said Gangloff "raised no objection" to the decision. Either way, how Gangloff can be involved in the investigation when serious questions linger about his own conduct is unfathomable. For instance, when Gangloff made the decision, did he know of the personal benefit to Cornelius and Harry Thomason? Did he know of interest "at the highest levels of the White House"? In short, does Gangloff have an interest in how his division's investigation comes out?

Justice is also stalling on an extensive FOIA request on Travelgate filed by the Landmark Legal Foundation. Though Landmark was informed several months ago that a one-foot stack of documents responsive to the request has been identified, it won't be released before "consultations" with Reno. But Reno's interests may conflict with full disclosure, since the conduct of her subordinates and perhaps herself is in question.

There has also been at least one leak regarding the travel investigation from a senior level in Justice, which raises questions about whether the investigation has been compromised. In a February 24 letter to Reno, Republican Reps. William Clinger, Henry Hyde, and Dick Armey wrote: "It is particularly disturbing to know that one DOJ employee has told congressional staff that criminal charges would probably be filed against one or more of the former Travel Office employees. We have to wonder about the appropriateness and timing of that remark and hope that it is not consistent with Department policy."

I'm told the offending official was Associate Deputy Attorney General David Margolis, who spoke about the case with Donald Goldberg, deputy counsel to Chairman John Conyers of the House Government Operations Committee. A career prosecutor, Margolis is a top aide in the office of the deputy attorney general, who oversees the criminal division. He was brought in by Philip Heymann, but had the political connections to be kept on by Jamie Gorelick, Heymann's successor. Under the federal rules of criminal procedure, it's a crime for a lawyer to divulge information disclosed in grand jury proceedings, which Margolis may have done. Since he is a career prosecutor, this would have been a knowing violation of the law. Moreover, attorneys for Dale and Wright may now challenge any indictment on grounds that their clients were victims of a vindictive prosecution. Both Margolis and the Conyers staff could be said to have an interest in seeing indictments handed down, a development that would be seen as vindicating the administration. (While not confirming or denying the conversation between Margolis and Goldberg, Justice Department spokesman Carl Stern said: "It is not uncommon for DOJ investigators and congressional committees with oversight to consult and coordinate during a criminal investigation." If Justice is "coordinating" criminal investigations with the Hill, there may be a much broader scandal brewing.)

Margolis—who was criticized in 1986 for not seeking an indictment against Teamsters president Jackie Presser, a Reagan supporter—had his fingers in both Travelgate and the botched Foster suicide investigation. In a July 2, 1993 letter from Janet Reno to Mack McLarty, Reno revealed that Margolis was the senior DOJ official who ensured "that the [White House Review] is in substance consistent with the FBI's report concerning its dealings with the White House on this matter." The Review, however, did not mention certain FBI–White House contacts divulged by the Sessions letter, which Sessions said was reviewed by Justice. Therefore Margolis was in a position to know that the White House Review had omitted important information. (In all likelihood, Margolis also drafted the Heymann letter to Podesta that was used by the White House as political cover.)

Margolis is also one of two Justice Department lawyers who were present during the July 22 search of Foster's office. Though Heymann had been designated by Reno to oversee the investigation of the suicide, Margolis raised no objection as Nussbaum conducted the search and possibly obstructed the investigation. Margolis and his DOJ colleague Roger Adams, two FBI agents, and some Park Police looked on as Nussbaum withheld several Whitewater documents from investigators—and who knows what else?—on grounds of "executive privilege" that are disingenuously bogus. (Personal papers of the president can't be withheld on grounds of executive privilege.)

All of this bespeaks the need for a special counsel on Travelgate. Justice can't investigate independently. Fortunately, there's a special counsel already in business, Robert Fiske, and he is investigating the Foster death as part of his mandate. It will not be enough for Fiske to conclude that Foster committed suicide. He will need to explore fully the potential reasons for it. In addition to Whitewater, Fiske might take a look at Travelgate. Foster's death, then, will not have aided the cover-up after all. ❐

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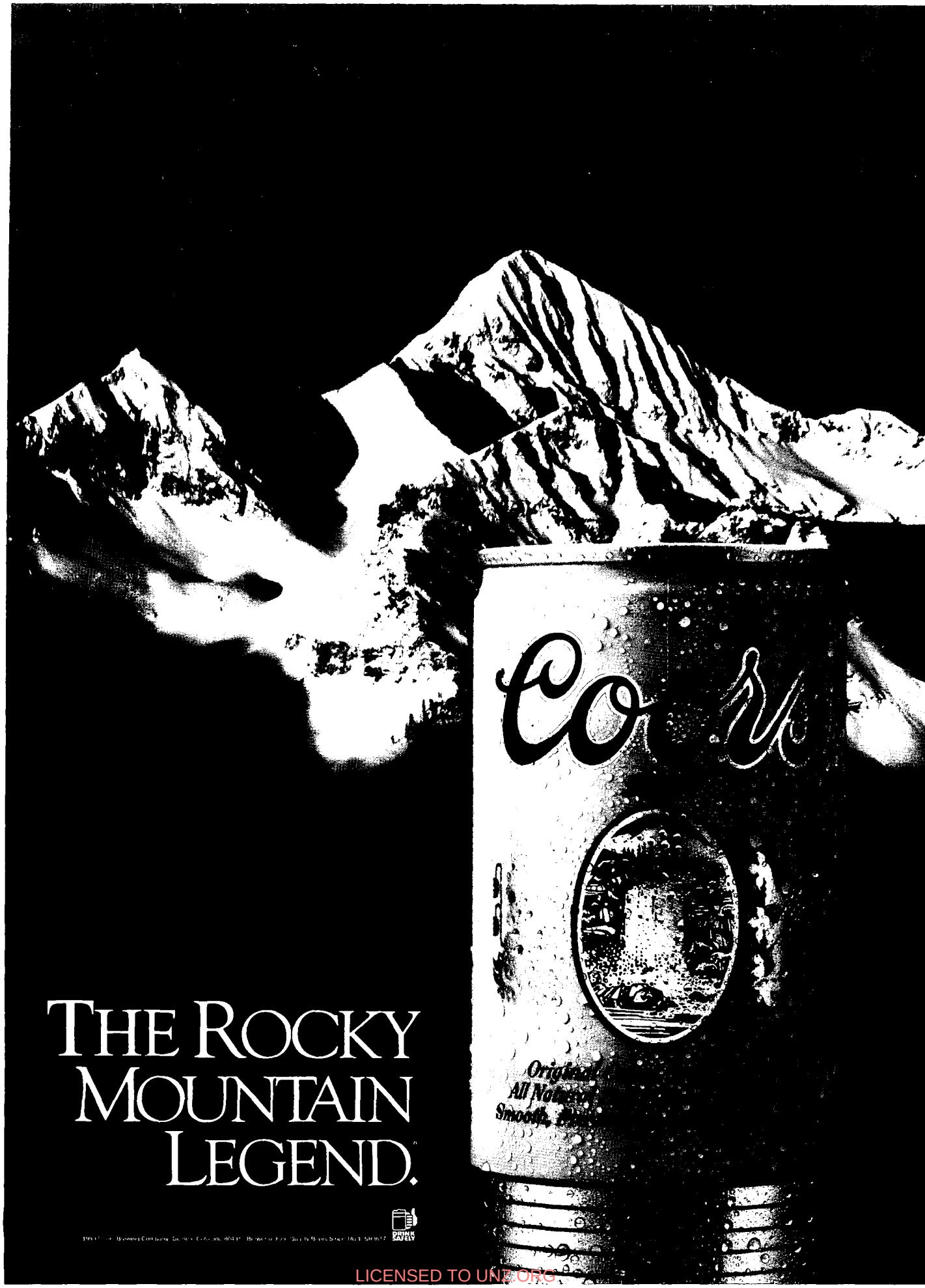

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